

ANGLO- SOVIET JOURNAL

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C. R. Whittaker, A.R.I.B.A.

Soviet Artists and Scientists in Britain

AND BOOK REVIEWS, ETC.

SCR

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Organ of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR

Soviet Artists and Scientists in Britain



November-December 1953



IT WAS with great pleasure that the SCR greeted the arrival in this country on November 3 of the largest and most distinguished group of Soviet visitors that has ever come here. The delegation consisted of twenty-seven people, of whom eight were ballet or folk dancers, and ten formed a concert party. The delegation also included a film producer, a puppet master, and two doctors. We are very happy that the head of the British Section of VOKS came here to renew his acquaintance with the Society and its work.

Below we give a full list of the members of the delegation :

Georgi FARMANYANTS. Ballet dancer, Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow. Specialises in national ballet and character dancing.

Galya IZMAILOVA. Folk dancer, Uzbekistan State Philharmonia. With her partner and accompanist (*doira* player), *Avner BARAYEV*.

A. KLYMOV, V. SHUBARIN, P. SOROKIN. Russian folk dance trio, Piatnitsky Folk Song and Dance Ensemble.

Alla SHELEST. Prima Ballerina, Kirov (Mariinsky) Opera House, Leningrad. Created title role of Khachaturyan's *Gayaneh*. With her partner, *K. SHATILOV*.

Zara DOLUKHANOVA. Mezzo-soprano. Honoured artist, Armenian SSR. Soloist, USSR Radio Committee. Stalin Prize winner, 1951. Very wide repertoire ; specialises in Bach and Handel.

A. IVANOV. Baritone, Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow.

Galina OLEINICHENKO. Coloratura soprano. Stalin scholarship and graduate (1953), Odessa Conservatoire. Now at Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow.

V. OTDELYONOV.

And their accompanists, *Izina ZAITSEVA* and *Avram MAKAROV*.

Bella DAVIDOVICH. Pianist. Baku Conservatoire and Moscow Conservatoire. First prize, Fourth Piano Contest, Warsaw, 1949 (tied with Halina Czerny-Stefanska). Specialist in Chopin.

Igor OISTRAKH. Violinist (son of David Oistrakh). Won Beniawski Violin Contest, Poznan, 1952.

G. V. ALEXANDROV. Film producer. People's artist of the USSR. Stalin Prize winner, 1941 and 1950. Worked with Eisenstein on *Potemkin*, *Que Viva Mexico*, etc. Produced *Jolly Fellows*, *Circus*, *Volga-Volga*, *Meeting on the Elbe*, *Glinka*, etc.

S. V. OBRAZTSOV. Puppet-master, painter, singer, actor, writer, teacher. Director, Central Puppet Theatre, Moscow. Stalin Prize winner. With his wife and accompanist, *Olga OBRAZTSOVA*.

Mr. PONOMARYEV, of the Leningrad Philharmonia.

Dr. ILINA. Chairman of the Executive Committee of Medical Workers' Union.

Dr. KAZANTSEVA. Director of Paediatrics Institute of the Academy of Medical Sciences. Child specialist.

V. S. BOGATYREV. Head of the British Section of VOKS (All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries).

G. P. BESSEDIN. Teacher.

Mr. KHLYSTOV. Engineer.

In all, our Soviet guests made nearly a hundred public appearances during their five-week stay, as well as paying many private visits to film studios, theatres, factories, hospitals, and so on. In London, the musicians and dancers appeared at the Royal Festival Hall, the Royal Albert Hall, the Wigmore Hall, the Scala Theatre, the Stoll Theatre and the Poplar Civic Theatre, while Mr. and Mrs. Obratsov appeared at the Conway Hall, the New Boltons Theatre Club, the Salle Erard and the Theatre Royal, Stratford, and Dr. Ilina and Dr. Kazantseva spoke at the Holborn Hall and to a gathering of specialists at the SCR. (Details of events organised by the SCR will be found in the SCR NOTES on page 45). Outside London, our Soviet guests appeared at, or visited, some forty towns in England, Wales and Scotland, and were given civic welcomes by the Mayors and Lord Mayors of twelve of them. Mr. Alexandrov, Mr. Obratsov, Miss Shelest, Mr. Shatilov, Miss Izmailova and Mr. Barayev appeared on television, and Miss Davidovich, Miss Dolukhanova, Mr. Ivanov and Mr. Oistrakh on sound radio.

From among the many enthusiastic press comments we select the following: "... remarkable and subtle rhythm . . . this bewitching, alluring and amusing performance . . . nobody so far in my experience has equalled our two visitors from Tashkent" (*John O'London's Weekly* on Izmailova and Barayev). "No more genial or charming character has ever graced our TV screens than Mr. Alexandrov . . . and certainly no more enchanting puppeteer has ever been seen in this country than Mr. Obratsov" (*Evening Standard*). "... here was a genius . . . already one of the supreme violinists of the earth . . . his remarkable training and his innate gifts together may make him one of the great performers of musical history. Already, at twenty-three, he need not bow to any living competitor" (*Daily Express*, on Oistrakh). "... unexpected discovery of high artistry . . . melting, expectant, sensuous timbre . . . abundant glowing tone . . . exquisitely sung . . . the vocal delights she can offer in such number . . . vivacious *portamenti*, a ravishing *messa di voce* . . ." (*The Times*, on Dolukhanova).

The enormous success of this delightful delegation is a happy omen for 1954, the SCR's thirtieth anniversary year, when several delegations of Soviet artists, scientists and other specialists are expected to visit us.

USSR 1953

Distinguished British Visitors

IN September 1953 the SCR was able to send two notable delegations to visit the USSR: a group of nine architects, the guests of the Union of Soviet Architects, and a mixed group of actors, writers, scientists and others, as the guests of VOKS. Below we print representative reports from a number of these visitors on various aspects of their tours.

A British Archæologist in the USSR

V. Gordon Childe

ON August 28 I had the privilege of seeing in the Hermitage in Leningrad the relics recovered by the expedition of the Academy of Sciences under Rudenko from the princely burial mounds of Pazyryk in the High Altai. In them, tattooed bodies, undigested food, carved wooden furniture and horse trappings, embroidered silks, patterned carpets, dyed felt hangings, painted leather, have been preserved literally on ice with their colours as fresh as when they were buried round about 400 BC! They illustrate how, nearly 2,500 years ago, elements from the south-east, from the south-west and from the north had been harmoniously blended to form a brilliant culture in the heart of Eurasia.

Two days later I was there seeing with my own eyes such a culture, not frozen but alive and creative; for I had flown to Central Asia and was the guest of the Tadzhik people.

A journey to Central Asia, whether on camel-back or more commodiously in an *aeroflot* plane, is still romantic. No one can escape the thrill of actually seeing the Aral Sea, the valley of the Jaxartes, of watching the red sun set over the rippling dunes of the Hungry Desert (Kyzyl Kum) and the lights of a city as big as Liverpool spreading out 10,000 feet below, and then next dawn crossing the golden valley of Samarkand and the snow-clad Hissar range to alight in the Upper Oxus basin in the new city of Stalinabad. But life in the liberated Central Asian republics is still more exciting.

Of course one has heard of the contributions of Russian science and technology to the development of Central Asia—of irrigation works, electrification, mechanisation and industrialisation. Such things I have seen, if on a less ambitious scale, in the colonies of non-socialist states. One has even seen in them new towns, albeit to house the alien ruling group and far less imaginatively planned than Stalinabad, with its network of spacious but always well-shaded avenues (how vividly I recall sweating in the broiling midwinter sun from one palace of bureaucrats to another in New Delhi twenty years ago).

It is no news that the October Revolution has brought to the exploited peoples of Central Asia the benefits of European science. But all too often the impact of European technology destroys more ancient native traditions of culture. Not so in Soviet Asia. In Asia civilisation is two thousand years older than in Europe; at the time of Pazyryk the "Iron Age A" peasants of southern England showed not a trace of artistic capacity that survives and were just starting to build tribal refuges against the raids of kinsmen beyond the Channel. In the heart of Eurasia these ancient cultural traditions have been kept alive among the peoples, despite centuries of class division and consequent intertribal and colonising wars, and in the new socialist society now blossom afresh, fertilised by progressive elements from Europe.

One day we visited a collective farm, irrigated and highly mechanised. But

we happened to find a brigade of workers in their lunch hour dancing traditional folk dances with immense verve and unfeigned spontaneity to an accompaniment of native music on national instruments. And we were subsequently entertained by another worker who sang Tadjik songs, accompanied by another native instrument. That same evening we had the good fortune to hear in the superb Stalinabad Theatre of Opera and Ballet the same sort of national songs sung by the artists of the permanent theatre company accompanied by the traditional instruments and effectively orchestrated. These national traditions of music, song and dance are not just preserved as museum pieces, but are alive among the liberated people. Not only did we see and hear the workers on a typical collective farm, we had the privilege of listening to national artist Zhuraev singing one of his own recent compositions in traditional harmonies accompanied on national instruments. Even the popular Russian song *It's Awfully Jolly in Tadzhikistan* is thoroughly Asiatic in feeling. If on the same night the Stalinabad Company showed that they can present classical European opera and ballet superbly to their Tadjik compatriots, by touring the cities of the Union they enchant European audiences with the living national arts of Central Asia.

For membership of the Soviet Union has not, as is often alleged, meant Russification. Of course Russian is taught in all schools. It is the key to the scientific literature of Europe; for it would be absurdly uneconomic to translate for the benefit of 1,500,000 Tadjiks, into a language ill-adapted to modern scientific and technical terminology, elaborate scientific treatises such as Childe's *U Istokov Evropeiskoi Tsivilizatsii*. But the language of instruction is of course Tadjik, and we noticed that even the managers of the two collective farms we visited could speak no Russian. And after all Stalinabad and Tashkent remain oriental cities—in the best sense. They differ from all other oriental cities I know—Cairo, Mersia, Baghdad, Lahore and others—in one salutary respect: there are no flies. The mitigation of that pest is a gift from Europe that Asia can well accept without impairing her native cultural traditions.

And of course, as throughout the USSR, the revived societies of Central Asia are busily recovering and preserving the concrete monuments of their remoter past. The archaeological department of the Central Asiatic University in Tashkent is supervising systematic excavations under a long-term plan not only in the Uzbek SSR but also in adjacent Turkmenia. The ruin-mound of Old Nisa has thus yielded outstanding treasures of Parthian civilisation. Namazga Tepe promises to take us back several thousand years further, perhaps to the very beginning of farming in the Old World. It will certainly supplement and correct the results of the celebrated excavations of the American, Pumpelly, in two mounds at Anau half a century ago; for here the prehistoric cultures, known as Anau I, II and III, are found, not in distinct mounds, but stratified one over the other at one site in the right order and buried in turn by a layer of remains that should be datable by connections with the ancient literate civilisations of historical Mesopotamia.*

In Russia and Armenia

A. Douglas Jones

DURING our Russian visit we flew about 8,000 miles, much of it by a chartered plane which the Soviet architects put at our disposal to enable us to maintain the schedule we had planned. First of all, however, there was Moscow. At the Moscow airport we were met by a large and attractive Russian, Ivan Markielov, who is the secretary of the Union of Soviet Architects. (We immediately rechristened him "Sonny Boy," and the name stuck.)

*See also ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL, Vol. XIII, No. 3; *Archæological Organisation in the USSR*, by V. Gordon Childe.

What first strikes you in Moscow is the enormous width of the streets. Gorky Street, reconstructed in 1937-39, which runs alongside the hotel we stayed in, is about 200 feet wide, and this is quite normal. Some streets are considerably wider. One of our party who was there in 1932 told us that most of the streets in those days were narrow cobbled affairs with wooden buildings on either side. In the process of road-widening, if one of the existing buildings was considered worth retaining, it was moved bodily to new preformed foundations.

One of the other impressive things about these streets, particularly noticeable in Kiev and Leningrad, was the roadside tree-planting. Trees of a height of thirty feet and more had been brought from the forests and planted all along the rebuilt streets. I am not, I think, exaggerating when I say that in all the towns we visited, with the possible exception of Stalingrad, there is now no sign of war damage. This proved something of an embarrassment to us when we were questioned about our own war-damage repairs.

In Moscow one of the great things you are introduced to is the Metro. The parts of these underground stations most frequently illustrated are the large underground concourses which connect the platforms. I believe that a similar arrangement is being adopted in the new London underground stations, whereby instead of walking down a platform to your train you walk down a central hall which gives on to the platforms on either side of it. These Moscow concourses are free from advertisements, but they are enormously ornate, which is perhaps a compensating factor. After visiting the Kremlin and seeing its incredibly richly decorated but very lovely Byzantine churches, one realises that there is a Russian tradition of elaborate ornamentation which is foreign to us but may be ingrained in their outlook. In fact, the Hall of St. George in the 1849 Palace in the Kremlin has been cribbed, lock, stock and barrel, for one of the Metro stations.

On the whole I thought their underground trains inferior to ours, but their station lighting seems to be of a higher intensity, and their escalators are certainly faster! Their stations are incredibly clean: the fact that smoking is not allowed in the underground probably helps quite a bit.

I must mention how well they are looking after their historic buildings. In fact this is true of every worthwhile building we saw in Russia. They must have spent millions of roubles on this work; in the Kremlin and at Kiev they have cleaned and repaired the mosaics and paintings most beautifully. Seeing them at work made one think of our own historic buildings, and not least of Westminster Abbey.

Three of our evenings in Moscow were spent at the Bolshoi Theatre, where we saw *Swan Lake*, *Ivan Susanin* and *Ruslan and Ludmila*. I do not think anyone could see *Swan Lake* at the Bolshoi and remain unmoved. The colours in the auditorium are the traditional gold, red and white, and the proscenium curtain is also gold, while the seats are covered in a red material. In the centre of the ceiling is an enormous chandelier, and fixed around the walls at regular intervals are candelabra. This form of lighting makes the whole place glitter.

On our third day in Moscow we were taken to the Institute which is the headquarters of their chief architect, Vlasov. Quite apart from this Institute, there is a Projects Institute, which deals with the planning problems of the city in their broadest terms. Then comes Vlasov's Institute, which is responsible to the Moscow Soviet [Town Council.—Ed.] for the details of the new plan—for the street patterns, for the siting of parks, open spaces and individual buildings, and for the design of a number of building types. There are separate architects' offices in Moscow for the design of the Underground stations, for schools, for cinemas, for the university, and so forth. Apart from town planning, Vlasov seems to be mainly responsible for the provision of new adminis-

trative offices and for new dwellings and the ancillary buildings that go with them, such as underground garages, shops, clubs and so on.

It is the normal procedure to erect the various building types simultaneously and not to concentrate only on dwellings. In fact, in Stalingrad, where dwellings are still needed, they are building a planetarium, but everyone seems to take this for granted.

A certain amount of private practice is also encouraged, and the Moscow Underground people seem to put a number of their stations out to competition. One member of the full-time staff of the Moscow School of Architecture, Poliakov, has just completed a station which he won in open competition. This was the station I mentioned earlier which was based on the design of the Hall of St. George in the Kremlin.

Chief architect Vlasov is the administrative head of thirteen groups of architects, or "workshops", as they call them. Each group is autonomous and has its own architect at the head, and under him are structural, civil and electrical engineers and other necessary technicians, in the ratio of about two architects to three engineers. There are no "town-planners" as such, because the architects are themselves the "town-planners". Their training, which is usually of six years' duration, includes a course in town-planning.

Vlasov is in personal command of one of the thirteen "workshops", and he is dealing with the south-west part of Moscow, around the new University. Most of our time at the Institute was spent in Vlasov's section. The area in front of the University, now occupied by small buildings, is to become a public park. At the end of this park and on an axis of the University there is a river which curls round at this point in an almost complete semi-circle. This river is to be widened and its water-content is to be considerably increased, and in its bend a new stadium is to be built. Around the University itself a number of artificial lakes are to be constructed; the siting of some of the new buildings on the lakeside is reminiscent of school sketch designs. One of the proposed lakeside buildings I particularly noticed was an open-air concert "bowl".

Certainly everything is being planned on a lavish scale. The new tree-lined boulevards are to be 150 metres wide! Everything is very formal. When I was in Prague, which is a thoroughly medieval city, I got so tired of the medieval street pattern that I longed for the charm of the Renaissance vista and for the wide Parisian boulevards and parks. The new Moscow will certainly have these qualities, but I am afraid that it may also have monotony, and possibly traffic complications at road junctions. The Moscow architects are betting on the efficiency of plenty of white lines painted on the wide roads. They may be right. They certainly will have no problems of narrow roads. To return to this question of monotony: no houses are to be built in Moscow, only flats. A good deal of "private" house building does go on outside Moscow in town and country, and the government advance 10,000 roubles to those who wish to build; but no new houses will be built in the city of Moscow. Further, all new flat building appears to be more or less of a height, that is about eight storeys at eleven feet floor to floor. Vlasov obviously realises the danger of monotony, and he is attempting to give his blocks of flats a "feeling of plasticity", as he calls it, by introducing projections and setbacks, both in plan and in section, and by using the "English bay window". He is also hoping to use more colour, and some of the drawings we saw on the drawing-boards used the traditional Russian baroque reds and whites. The high multi-storey administrative blocks will probably help the skyline quite a bit.

The older post-war blocks of flats are of brick or brick faced with "ceramics"; I find them deadly to look at, but it is only fair to say that these blocks have been rushed up since the war, and that Vlasov's new buildings will be a great advance on what we saw already built.

Standard flat plans are used to speed erection. In these, bathrooms and lavatories are on inside walls, which gets over one problem of fenestration, and the drainage is being pre-fabricated in with the wall panel. By our standards they use a lot of corridor space, and at eleven feet floor to floor their headroom is far greater. My impression of the Moscow flats was that the planning was very good, while in Stalingrad less attention seems to be paid to the relationship of bedrooms to bathroom and kitchen to dining room.

Another complication that the Russian architects have to cope with, brought about by the need for speed of erection, is the standardisation of the parts of buildings. Because of the absence of private enterprise in the USSR they are able to plan on a vast scale; this has great advantages from the point of view of mass production and its beneficial influence on the speed of erection. But this large-scale planning also has inherent dangers. I do not know to what extent the parts of buildings are being standardised, but in the Moscow building exhibition we saw a good deal of evidence of it, including some precast classical details, and it looks as if standardisation will develop further with the introduction of framing and pre-stressed concrete; they are now experimenting with these forms of construction. This problem is not confined to Russia, but it is more acute there.

We saw two types of flats in Moscow and in Stalingrad too; one consisted of two bedrooms, bathroom and lavatory, sitting room, dining room and maid's bedroom, with its washing space adjacent to the kitchen, for reasons of drainage. In the other type there was only one bedroom and one living room, with no maid's room. The flats were all centrally heated and provided with garbage chutes; the TV aerials on the older blocks of flats were thicker to the square yard than they are over here.

Generally speaking, joints, door furniture, and bathroom and kitchen fittings are of a poorer quality than our own—though the windows are double. The inferior quality of such articles is due to the fact that since 1917 the USSR has been obliged to concentrate on the development of heavy industry, and the less immediately important consumer goods have had to take a back seat until recently.

Soviet housing is a charge on the national budget, and flat rents are based on the tenant's income, varying from 5% to 8% of his pay packet. Having low rents and basing them on income permits of people of higher and lower income groups living together.

Vlasov's studio and the other studios in which all this work is being done are pleasant, light rooms. About a third of the staff seem to be women. All round the studios were books of Italian detail, and any of the drawings that the staffs were working on could win the Tite prize. It will be interesting to see what happens to classical detail when pre-stressed concrete really comes into its own. There is the same affection for the classics in both the Moscow and the Leningrad Schools of Architecture, and presumably in the other schools as well.

There are seven applicants for each place, at any rate in the Moscow and Leningrad schools, and each student holds a State grant. All in all, it seemed to me that the Soviet schools of architecture lead well-ordered and settled lives which give a sense of satisfaction and security.

The Russians have tried out and rejected what we call "modern" architecture, which they call "constructivism". There is a large Corbusier administrative building in Moscow, put up in 1932, and although it is in a first-class state of repair it does look pretty grim. The Russians feel that our "constructivist" architecture does not cater primarily for the people but rather for a coterie of like-minded "constructivists".* They are probably right, but I

* See *An Architect's View*, by John Pinckheard (ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL, Vol. XIII, No. 4), for an interview with Professor Savitsky and G. Zakharov on this question.

did not find the Russian architects making any great effort to find out what the Russian people really want. In any case I do not see how they could begin to set about it. I think it probable that they are working to a broadly based but preconceived æsthetic formula, which attempts to take account of tradition (which "constructivism" does not do), but which is entirely transitory.

In saying this I am not trying to fool myself that our architecture is anything but transitory too. If "constructivism" is rejected, and as we have not got the necessary scientific knowledge to build an architecture based on human need, then the only remaining alternative is to do what the Russians are doing—though considerable improvements and refinements can be made. With the intellectual development of the Russian people as a whole, they may demand a more adventurous æsthetic approach to their architecture. At present their better architects are trying to interpret classical architecture, rather than slavishly copy it

Rudnief, the delightful principal architect of the new Moscow University, made a revealing remark when he said that he liked to think of his buildings "in terms of the plan", and that "if a plan works well, the right architectural expression will be achieved".

Before leaving the University, I want to mention the four statues which are sited two-thirds of the way up the central block, and at its corners. These statues are made up of cubes of melted stone. At the building exhibition we had already seen examples of melted basalt and melted limestone.

From Moscow we flew to Stalingrad by regular passenger plane; we were met at the airport at 8.30 a.m. by Simbirtsev, the Stalingrad city architect. The wartime front line at Stalingrad is now marked every few hundred yards along its length by tank turrets; I had not realised what a narrow strip of land the Russians had held here, in places only a few hundred yards deep: it ran along the river Volga, across which the Russian were supplied at night. After the German surrender not one single building remained intact. The Stalingrad Sword is looked after with great reverence in the City Museum.

The three most interesting things at Stalingrad are the new hydro-electric project, the Volga-Don Canal, and the children's railway. The hydro-electric scheme, which was started in 1950 and is to be completed in 1956, consists of a dam across the Volga nearly three and a half miles long, together with a system of locks. It is intended to raise the level of the water by seventy-five feet, for the dual purposes of electric power and irrigation, and an inland lake will be created of similar proportions to the artificial Tsimlyanskaya "Sea" near Rostov-on-Don. The Tsimlyanskaya Sea is over 110 miles long and nearly twenty miles wide. Already the timber lining the river Volga is being felled and floated away in the form of rafts with little huts built on them for those in charge.

The Volga-Don Canal, opened last year, connects the two rivers so that sizeable ships can now travel between the Black Sea and the Caspian. This canal, which is sixty-five miles long and has fourteen locks, was built in three years. It cuts into the steppes, a dull landscape not unlike the Denbigh moors, but on a much vaster scale. We went as far as the tenth lock. While we were there it got dark; I shall never forget the twilight over the empty steppes on the edge of the Don Cossack country, with the dogs barking and breaking the silence, and the lights going up in the few houses round the lock.

There are children's railways in a number of Russian towns. They consist of a more or less full-sized train, which runs on about three miles of track and is manned entirely by children. Parents are allowed on the train on sufferance, if they have a very young child with them. One of these trains, which runs along the embankment at Stalingrad, passed by us on one of our sightseeing tours. It looked rather like an Emmett train. All the seats appeared to be occupied.

From Stalingrad we flew via Rostov (where we were impressed to see two navvies drinking champagne for their elevenses, and where also we discovered that it isn't done to offer tips in Russia) on to Erevan, the capital of Armenia.

Erevan sits near the foot of Mount Ararat and is nearly in both Turkey and Persia. Mount Ararat is the mountain on which Noah's Ark became lodged when the floods subsided; this is not surprising, because it is about 17,000 feet high. There are still remains of the romantic old town of Erevan left, built up in terraces with stone walls, flat-roofed and often colonnaded. But the new town is sweeping all that away, which seems inevitable and is nice for the inhabitants, but is a pity from the point of view of the picturesque. The new buildings here are more indigenous than the new architecture we saw elsewhere in the USSR, and the craftsmanship in stone, wood and metal is of a very high standard.

At Erevan we had our finest hour when one member of our party drank the City Architect under the table. . . . From Erevan we flew through the Caucasus, the highest mountains in Europe, via the Black Sea to Kiev. This town, the capital of the Ukraine (and at one time that of Russia), is full of the most lovely Byzantine and Renaissance buildings. It is also the home of the delicious Kiev cutlets.

While at Erevan we had been sweltering in the heat, in Leningrad, which we reached after Kiev, we had to wear overcoats and turn our coat collars up. Here a number of us rang up our homes, which must have caused considerable commotion in some rural telephone exchanges at home.

It would be possible to write about Leningrad for hours, but I am going to content myself with saying that it must be one of the most lovely cities in Europe, and together with the surrounding palaces at Peterhof, Pavlovsk and Tsarskoe Selo it must be the richest part of the world in eighteenth-century architecture.

Reflections on a Three-week Visit to the USSR ~ W. M. Hyman

MY apologies to myself for referring to such matters once more: the statement has been made unendingly that delegations to the USSR are given every facility to go where they wish and see what they wish. I repeat "what they wish"—for clearly they don't ask to be shown official secrets. Yet other statements also persist to the effect that these wily Russians will only show what *they* want the visitor to see. In any case, the Russians are not 100% wily, and we are not 100% daft. Our delegation consisted of eleven men and women with distinct and different interests. We were asked what we wanted to see, and each desired in part to see something of specialist interest. We were given every facility to see and do what we wanted.

To me the whole visit was impressive, and much that we saw breathtaking. Everybody by now has heard of the wonderful Moscow Metro—but it is just breathtaking. The spaciousness of its stations, their beauty, their boldness, their architectural and cultural representation just have to be seen to be grasped. Does it sound small? I wanted to smoke and asked if I could. I could of course—but I just didn't because no one else smoked. The Russians are so proud of their Metro that it remains almost spotless and I looked continuously for the match or cigarette-end, but saw none.

Here as everywhere else I went, I could not help being struck by the complete absence of poster or indeed any advertisement. There is propaganda "advertisement" in the fact that one cannot turn one's head without seeing a portrait or statue of Lenin or Stalin, and I mean literally that one cannot turn one's head: but advertisements, good, bad, beautiful or ugly, do not exist, for the sale of goods in our sense of private, competitive business does not exist. One knows that one is entering a Communist State, and yet the absence

of anything similar to our glaring, trumpeting, noisy dope to buy pills, or the perfect corset, or the most delirious gin, is very obvious. A small point—but worthy?

There is so much to thrill the Socialist that some things are difficult to fathom. Travellers always note that continental sanitary standards are much inferior to ours. In Moscow and indeed in all the towns that I visited—Leningrad, Tashkent, Stalinabad—the Russians are so sensitive and sensible that all food is kept under glass, and shop window displays of food are in dummy form; yet their sanitary arrangements are pretty appalling. I hope to go again in three or four years, and I am certain that I shall see vast improved changes, for they have done miraculous things in thirty years. Yet I was just unable to use the urinal of the hospital serving a huge hydro-electric works, and the urinal was a few yards away from the hospital operating room.

The people I thought were very shabbily clothed (the Russians, who are child-like in their desire for approval and praise, readily admit this) and women's hats incredibly ugly. I didn't expect to see "fashion": but what I invariably saw was just ugly and without good taste.

But what does all this matter in the light of the nation's achievement? To go to the farthest Soviet Republic—Tadzhikistan, nearly 3,000 miles from Moscow—and meet a cheerful, contented, semi-oriental people whose standard of living has been raised, in thirty years, not a hundredfold but several thousandfold, is truly staggering. A town like Stalinabad, which had consisted of three mud-hut villages with a population of 7,000, is now a thriving, beautiful town of 50,000. There were before the Revolution in the whole of the Republic of Tadzhikistan ten schools of sorts, and now there is full-time compulsory education in 3,000 schools with 300,000 pupils and 20,000 teachers, and fine libraries, and museums, and theatres, and an Academy of Sciences, and modern blocks of flats, and thousands of trees, none older than the architect in his early thirties who took us round. A town with electricity and gas, water and sewage, which has eliminated TB and ringworm, which scourged the population, a town serving the fine, modern collective farms which encircle it. The miracle is there to be seen.

I can say all this and indeed more of Tashkent in Uzbekistan. But I want to tell of the schools here and in Moscow and Leningrad.* The Russians have far to go to reach our best standards in school building or indeed our building standards in secondary education. They have not our special subject-rooms for music or art, or crafts or domestic science or physical education. They make up for these in their palaces and houses of pioneers. But the schools will have all these and more, for the overwhelming reaction was to a pent-up passion in the whole people to create an educated nation. If we were imbued with a particle of their determination to develop education standards, I would be happier. Their beautiful new Moscow University, with its 45,000 rooms and complete suites for each of 6,000 students, is an example of the standards that they have set for themselves throughout the education system. Now, in each school they have a fully equipped library, with a librarian normal to staffing, and a full-time doctor and nurse in every school! The equality of status of men and women is a natural element in their life and outlook. When I asked a young woman head of a boys' school with 1,200 pupils what her reaction was to the twelve (out of fifty-two) male members of her staff and their reaction to her, she genuinely did not grasp my query, and ultimately replied that "it just doesn't arise". For the time being the children attend school half-time—from 8.30 to 1.0 and from 2.0 to 5.30. But almost all children belong to the Young Pioneer Movement and supplement their school studies in palaces where there are all conceivable recreational and educational

* Alderman Hyman is Chairman of the West Riding Education Committee.—Ed.

facilities, "circles" for music (vocal and instrumental), crafts of every kind, swimming, gymnastics, boxing, and so on and so on. The philosophy here is to indoctrinate communism, and they make no pretences about it. The secretary of the Young Communist League in Stalinabad merely said: "But of course—we are a Communist state".

To see the Palace of Pioneers in Leningrad made my heart leap. It was a Tsarist palace of over 400 rooms—many of them palatial—with a staff of fifty and an annual budget of £100,000. I saw its astonishing activities throughout; and could I help being impressed by a corridor of twenty rooms, each with a grand piano, where children were individually taking their musical study? These "palaces" in the larger towns, and "houses" in the suburbs, exist throughout the Union. They are a conception on a grand—a Leninist—scale, a far grander scale than their astounding Metro. The Metro after all is material. Here they are purposefully developing a new conception of mankind. The conception is in a minor way repeated in their recreational institutions (primarily under the control of their trade unions) attached to each large industrial works. When I compare them with our fumbling incursions in youth or adult work I grow envious. Our Ministry of Education would do well to appoint a commission to study these Pioneer Palaces and the work done in them, and adapt them to our system. It might well mean a leap forward of fifty years in British education.

I have exhausted my allotted space. The Russians, however different their philosophy and way of life from ours, are building a new world and in most ways an admirable world. Let us look upon their building with understanding and sympathy, and respond as people to people to their anxiety for peace on earth: and then there will be hope that war may be banished from the world, and a sane era dawn for mankind.

New Life in Tadzhikistan



Ela Sen

THE back-cloth of a Tadzhik theatre, which we visited, was embroidered and woven with traditional motifs, but prominently in the centre was embroidered the five-pointed star and the hammer and the sickle—emblems of the USSR. This, perhaps, symbolises Soviet Tadzhikistan, where out of the ashes of the old, out of their ancient culture and tradition, the Tadzhiks are building up a new life, such as half a century ago would have been considered impossible.

Tadzhikistan is a land of blends—where the old is in the new contained, and the new is by the old explained; where several nationalities are working together as citizens of this Republic. Particularly impressive is the way in which the Russians have helped and are still helping the Tadzhiks to develop along their national lines. (Perhaps this strikes me particularly as coming from a once colonial country of the British Empire.) This co-operation begins in the cradle—in the crèches and kindergartens. Uzbeks, Tadzhiks and Russians live and play side by side, without any differentiation.

Tadzhikistan, lying around the snow-capped Pamirs, or the Roof of the World, was one of the most backward colonies of the Tsarist Empire. The ancient culture, the arts and literature had been completely suppressed by waves of invasion and years of foreign domination. The people had been reduced to destitution by the whip of imperialist policy and the dictatorship of the *mullahs*. They grew cotton and potatoes in a few areas in an uneconomical manner; the rest of the country was desert.

With this picture before our eyes we came to the capital, Stalinabad—a growing city. Twenty-five years ago it had been a cluster of mud huts. In fact three villages of 7,000 had been knocked together to create this capital. The task is not completed yet, but already there are some magnificent buildings, some that are under construction and others that are planned. The streets have

been laid down and where there used to be garbage heaps there are parks. "We have accomplished much," said the city architect, "but you will still see some bad apartments, some old houses and even some mud huts; nevertheless you will also see some very good school buildings, apartments for the workers, and houses of culture and rest." The Foreign Office, within which is the Hall of the Supreme Soviet, is one of the buildings which architecturally dominate the city. It is modern, it is impressive and it is dignified. The new library, which has been designed with a definite Tadzhik motif in its architecture, will house 1,500,000 volumes, and as much attention will be paid to children's reading as to that of the older people. There are special reading-rooms for the young. The interior decoration combines traditional designs—the old Mohammedan trellis work in stone—with the best requirements of a modern library.

Tadzhikistan is a land of social miracles; one of these is the spectacle of education where twenty-five years ago literacy was 0.5 per cent. As it was put by a Tadzhik intellectual: "Twenty-five years ago there was one literate person in each village—the Mullah. Today if there is one illiterate person in any village, it is the *Mullah*." Where there were ten schools with ten scholars—and these, too, were religious schools—now there are 3,000 with 300,000 pupils and 20,000 teachers. In similar fashion have risen the higher academic institutions, and the Academy of Sciences was established ten years ago. Here again one sees that blend—old and young—the Chairman is the best-known and oldest Tadzhik poet Sadriddin Aini* and the Deputy Chairman is a young Doctor of Agriculture.

A further miracle is in the status and freedom of women. Perhaps very few women were so exploited—a triple exploitation, one of them told me: "that of the Tsar, the Emir of Bokhara and the *Mullah*"—and with the Revolution they determinedly dragged their feet out of these quicksands. It is typical of women all over the Soviet Union—and one which strikes forcibly any visitor from anywhere in the world—the tremendous part women play in national life and the strength with which they leaven all spheres of activity. In the still developing Republic of Tadzhikistan this too is apparent, and it is also apparent that the women are determined to rise above their past—in fact in spite of it—and take up their full responsibilities. Already they have done so, for we met women in important civil posts—the Secretary of the Supreme Soviet was a woman, in her forties, and one who had been a pioneer among the Tadzhik women of the Revolution.

There were two collective farms which we visited, both growing cotton—the Lenin and the Stalin Farms. Where cotton had once been one of the most primitive and hazardous of crops, the entire process has been mechanised, from ploughing to picking. It is an inspiring sight that so much labour of the workers has been lightened, production increased and general amenities introduced. In spite of the radio, the cinema and the libraries and reading rooms, the motif of national ways and customs runs through the lives of the farm workers. They have modern cottages to live in, but they still sit comfortably on the floor and eat. In leisure hours they dance their folk dances to the clapping of hands—young and old, men and women all join in. The old oriental ways of hospitality are as ingrained as ever, and now in their prosperity they can give them free expression without feeling the need of having to do without.

Cotton from the collective farms goes to the Combinats and at the Stalinabad Textile Combinat one was able to see the processes up to the finished article. One textile factory is much like another, with slight variations, but the important factor which does vary is the working conditions, and the

* See ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL, Vol. XIII, No. 3, and News, 1952, 15, for an article by Sadriddin Aini on *Avicenna, the Prince of Scholars*.

precautions against occupational diseases, especially in a country of high temperatures. Cotton needs a moist atmosphere for certain processes, especially in a short-staple variety, and this has been ensured in the Stalinabad Combinat, without detriment to the health of the worker. Occupational diseases—of the lung—due to cotton fluff, are diligently guarded against, with frequent X-rays, medical examinations, and so on. An immense settlement for the textile factory workers is being built where 7,000 families—altogether about 20,000 persons—will be accommodated in modern two- and three-roomed flats, centrally heated, with every convenience and amenity. The activities of the factory include a day and night kindergarten—as the work goes on in three shifts—where the workers' children are assured of every comfort and care, as we were able to see for ourselves, arriving there at the children's supper time. This assurance has created a feeling of confidence in the workers of the Combinat, and therefore the factory is assured also of better and higher production.

In Tadzhikistan one can still see the impact of the Revolution, for the old is still there side by side with the new. One can witness the building up of a modern Soviet state and the steps by which the advances are made. Within twenty-five years illiteracy has been liquidated; health services have been built up, and one learns that there are more doctors per 1,000 persons in Tadzhikistan than anywhere else in the USSR; the educational institutions created are on a par with those in other Soviet republics; freedom from want has been assured to the workers and peasants. Now the work of reconstruction and rebuilding goes on.

Tadzhikistan occupies an important position in Asian affairs, being linked to South-East Asia through Afghanistan and India on the one hand, and on the other being on the borders of the Chinese Republic. In a world of peace and peaceful relations this small Soviet Republic may well prove to be situated on one of the international highroads, and make its contribution to its bigger and less developed neighbours.

A Tadzhik Collective Farm

Herbert Spencer

THE Stalin Collective Farm, which I recently visited, is about half an hour's journey by car from Stalinabad, in the Central Asian republic of Tadzhikistan. This collective farm was founded in 1929 and includes the land of what was originally 124 individual farms. Over 2,000 families—more than 15,000 persons—now live in this collective.

The farm produces cotton, grain, fruit and vegetables, and a substantial part of the work done on its 17,000 hectares is now mechanised. Its productivity is increasing rapidly, and the income of the collective last year was fifty-six million roubles as compared with nine million roubles in 1940. The individual farmer's income in both money and produce is now approximately three times as great as it was ten years ago.

There are twenty schools on the collective, and the 3,800 pupils of these schools are taught by 106 teachers. There are also four kindergartens, forty-seven nurseries, six medical centres, four clubs, and twelve shops and stores.

Cultural life on the collective farms is progressing rapidly. All farmers have radio sets, and on both this farm and another which I visited I saw theatres where cinema shows are held daily, and many other forms of entertainment are arranged. On this and all other collective farms, a well-equipped lending library, with a full-time librarian, is attached to the headquarters of each brigade, and workers living a long distance from such a library have books delivered to them by car. All the farmers can read and write.

These, then, briefly are the facts—and they are, I think, impressive facts. But more important to me—and even more impressive—was the atmosphere

I found among the workers on the two farms I visited. They were alert, proud of their achievements, confident of the future, and undeniably happy. It was moving to see the joy with which workers on the Stalin Collective danced and sang to Tadjik music, during their lunch-break. And on those farms, as in all workshops and factories I visited, I found good discipline matched by a friendliness between managers and workers which creates an easy, informal atmosphere which it is quite impossible to describe.

The hospitality of these farmers is among the strongest impressions I have brought back with me from the Soviet Union, but perhaps the thing I shall remember longest will be the simple generosity of a Tadjik farm worker on the Stalin Collective, who invited us to take tea with him on the carpeted floor of his newly built and beautifully decorated cottage.

Medicine in Stalinabad

B. H. Kirman

EACH year sees an increasing sum devoted to the maintenance of health in the Soviet Union. This process goes on both directly and indirectly. Indirect measures which tend to improve health are probably of greater importance. These include money spent on better housing and such measures as the recent reductions in food prices. Other social expenditure also has an important bearing on health. For example the many new schools which are being erected all over the country provide more spacious and more hygienic premises for the children. At the disposal of the trade unions and other bodies are big funds for building crèches and kindergartens. These serve both to care for children while their mothers are working and as centres for the education of the parents in child hygiene.

The role of the public health service is both prophylactic and therapeutic. The service is both comprehensive and highly integrated. There are no sharp divisions such as exist here between the work of the school medical officer and the general practitioner, or the medical officer of health and the hospital. The pre-school period of child care is covered, largely through the crèches and kindergartens. There are full-time doctors in schools and in all the larger places of employment.

Prophylactic work includes measures of hygiene. The Soviet medical authorities now claim that diseases such as malaria which were, until recently, common in the Caucasus and central Asia have now been almost completely eliminated. Certainly those of us who have just returned from Stalinabad and Tashkent can vouch for the remarkable absence of mosquitoes in those heavily irrigated areas. Health education is also carried out on a very big scale by means of lectures, films, posters, pamphlets. Physiology is a general school subject, thus laying the basis for a scientific understanding of hygiene. The importance of adequate explanation of the nature of the disease by the doctor to the relatives of patients is one of the cardinal points in Soviet medicine.

In order to appreciate to the full the significance of our visit to the Stalinabad Medical Institute, it is necessary to give a little of the background. In Tadjikistan, of which this city is the capital, the revolution took place in 1922. At that time the population was 0.5% literate. The first train reached the city in 1929.

Stalinabad is a post-revolutionary city erected around several groups of mud huts. Vegetable life is almost entirely dependent on irrigation. Every tree in the shady streets draws water from the irrigation ditches.

There is now a Stalinabad university and a flourishing medical school, both of which are run and largely staffed by Tadjiks. The climate is continental, with hot summers and cool winters. Tropical diseases such as malaria, worm infestation, smallpox, dysentery, were very common, as well as tuber-

culosis and other bad conditions associated with poverty, bad housing, malnutrition and lack of sanitary facilities. Public health measures are claimed to have been very effective. Smallpox and malaria are said to be virtually unknown now. Soon after the revolution the policy was generally adopted in the USSR of directing a maximum of resources for health work and other social measures into those areas which stood in most need of them. The result has been that the central Asian republics now have enviable vital statistics and have a higher ratio of doctors to population than any other country in the world.

At first doctors were sent to these countries from Russia and the Ukraine. A medical school was started in Tashkent and many Uzbek and Tadzhik students went to Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, and so on. Meanwhile a consistent battle against illiteracy was waged in central Asia and compulsory general schooling introduced. On this basis it became possible in 1939 to open a Stalinabad medical institute. This is one of the many impressive white buildings which reflect the bright sunlight along the streets of the capital. In 1929 the site of the building was a marsh when the river overflowed, and was passable only for a rider on a good horse. The national poet, Sadridin Aini, described the area and said that it was necessary to mark the path with poles to avoid being engulfed by the swamp.

When the institute opened a number of the students had already completed part of their studies elsewhere, so that already ten groups of doctors have qualified in Stalinabad, more than 1,000 in all. The majority work in the national republic but others are working in Moscow and many other places. At the moment there are 1,500 students. When the paediatric institute opens next year there will be 2,000. In the first year of its life the institute took 300 students, representing forty-two nationalities; 80% were Tadzhiks. In addition to training undergraduates the school also undertakes research work and post-graduate training. Many of the students qualifying here go on to Moscow, Kiev or Leningrad for post-graduates studies. However, last year, the institute received permission to accept theses for higher medical degrees.

In addition to its clinical work the institute also acts as a centre for public health work in the republic and supervises measures of sanitation. Teams are sent out into the remote parts of this mountainous country, the eastern part of which is made up of the great Pamir ranges reaching to the China border. Considerable use is made of aeroplane transport. These teams carry on public health education and deal with local problems. At the same time regular refresher courses are run in the institute for the younger medical workers from the remote parts.

As in architecture, so in medicine, there is respect for national tradition. The institute is named after Avicenna, the great Tadzhik physician whose fame spread through the Arab world into Europe in the eleventh century. The equipment of the laboratories, operating theatres and so forth is on a very generous scale. All the microscopes, balances, epidiascopes and elaborate instruments, such as Geiger counters for investigating the rate of permeation of various substances in colloids, are of Soviet make. Much of this scientific and surgical equipment is supplied from Leningrad. It was interesting that the Tadzhiks showing us the institute appeared to be as proud of the fact that these instruments are Soviet as of their Tadzhik medical school.

The director, Rakimov, a Tadzhik, is a man of thirty-eight. When he was six his father was killed by *Kasmachi*, White terrorist bands. He himself graduated at this institute, of which he is now head. He told us that all of his students receive a stipend. The teaching is without fee. He stressed the attention the government had shown to the development of medical education in Tadzhikistan, a development only possible under the present social system.

We were interested in the arrangements for covering the remote parts of

this geographically difficult country with adequate medical services. The district hospital is the basic unit. The minimum team there consists of a surgeon, child specialist and physician. In some cases there is also a gynæcologist. In a few instances there is still only one doctor, but he is closely linked by telephone and by air with the district centre, to which he can send his patients or from which various specialists can come to him.

A member of our delegation, Professor Cook, expressed surprise at the very large number of students in the institute and doubted whether the adjacent hospital would provide them with adequate clinical experience. We learnt that the clinical work of the students is not confined to the main hospital but extends to a number of smaller institutions, for example the railroad district hospital, with its seventy-five beds, and the polyclinics.

In view of the youth of the institute it has not yet been possible to organise the teaching in Tadzhik, the main reason for this being the lack of suitable text-books. It is hoped to remedy this soon. It was pointed out that in other national republics, for example in Armenia and Georgia, there are excellent text-books of medicine in the national language. This also applies to Azerbaijan. In those republics there are two types of higher educational institution, the one giving instruction in the local language, the other in Russian.

We asked for an example of the type of original research being undertaken. The professor of pathological anatomy, who formerly had a military appointment, is engaged in summarising his war-time medical experience and at the same time is investigating virus hepatitis.

While walking round the institute and the hospital we saw a further three-storey building and two two-storey buildings under construction, which will accommodate the extra laboratories and lecture-rooms needed for the growing numbers of students.

Noting the high ratio of nurses to patients, we asked about the nurses' training school and found that here there is the standard two-year course. The midwives and the *feldshers*, on the other hand, do a four-year course and have the right to treat patients independently.

A high proportion of the medical staff whom we met, and of the students, are women. Women take up all specialities, including those which are more usually followed by men, such as urology. We met a woman specialist in this branch of surgery during our visit. In this hospital too the wards are small, ranging up to seven or eight beds. We saw a number of children in the surgical wards; they were kept separate and were not in the adult wards. They all seemed to be in good spirits. One boy we saw had just been operated for vesical calculus. His father was with him. Frequent visiting of children by parents is permitted. There were a number of older people among the medical staff, but the vast majority, particularly the Tadzhiks, were young, including ex-nurses and ex-*feldshers*.

The radiological equipment was of modern type, of Leningrad production. The main set which we saw was received last year. The department is equipped for all-round work, including pneumo-encephalography and similar procedures.

The anatomy department of this school was also well equipped. We noted that there was a microscope to each student. In the biology department we were told that special attention is paid to the helminths and similar parasites in view of the local importance of these organisms. Rather less stress is placed on botany for medical students. The anatomy of the higher vertebrates is studied, and also comparative anatomy.

The new buildings of the school and of the hospital were most impressive throughout. As an example, the numerous operating theatres can be quoted. These are very well lit, extremely spacious and well designed from the point of view of ensuring surgical cleanliness. Each theatre was equipped with two operating tables of the type familiar in Britain.

As we left the Stalinabad medical institute we caught a glimpse of a crowd of students assembling in one of the many auditoria. They were mainly Tadzhiks but there were among them many smaller groups of different nationalities. Students, nurses, and other staff seemed in no way abashed by the presence of strangers though obviously frankly curious. Unlike other parts of the Soviet Union, Tadzhikistan has not had quite such a spate of foreign visitors ; in particular, very few people from Britain have visited this republic since the war. We also noted that although discipline is obviously good and the wards are spotlessly clean, as is every part of the school and hospital, and the staff neatly and uniformly dressed, there is none of the rigid standing to attention when the director and senior staff approach, which is a feature of British hospital life. On the contrary, the nurses carried on with their regular work while we were there without interruption and appeared to be quite at their ease, talking to each other and enjoying an occasional joke while working. We got the impression that the staff of the hospital form a very closely knit team, including not only the medical and nursing staff, but also the assistant nurses, porters, and all. Regular staff meetings are held to discuss the work of the hospital. These are attended by all members of the staff without exception.

I have described two institutions at some length in an attempt to convey a first-hand impression of Soviet medicine in some of its aspects. I will mention in conclusion a discussion I had with a woman physician in Tashkent. She assured me that the problem of *quantity* had been solved in regard to numbers of medical practitioners, and that it is not necessary now for any doctor to work more than six hours a day at his practice. In regard to *quality* my impression is one of remarkable consistency. There are no isolated medical practitioners in the Soviet Union. Every doctor is a member of a team working in very close contact with his colleagues. Big capital investments of people and of material are being made in medical research in the Soviet Union and it seems clear that the next few years are likely to witness further remarkable advances. English takes pride of place as a foreign language in Soviet schools and scientific institutions. It seems likely that a knowledge of Russian will soon be essential for any medical scientist in Britain.

The Moscow Institute of Architecture

C. R. Whittaker

THROUGHOUT the visit of our delegation to the USSR, we were being surprised, staggered, shattered by the amount of building work going on. Stalingrad—forty-five architects in the office of the Chief Architect, Simbirtsev ; they must certainly be very hard pressed to get their building teams supplied with drawings. The number of architects in the whole union gives the same impression of there being a wide choice of opportunities for anyone who trains for the profession.

From the Director, Kropotov, Douglas Jones and myself were able to learn how the Moscow Institute of Architecture educates architects. The Institute is 200 years old and is the only architectural school in the country that is not attached to a university. It is accepted as one of the best in the USSR and students from other colleges frequently transfer for a “perfecting” course here after three years. At the moment there are a thousand students enrolled, making it almost three times as large as any similar school in England. About a third are women. There is keen competition for the available places, and for every one of the 150 students who started on September 1 this year there were five or six who were unsuccessful. The entrants come from all over the Union, even, for example, from Leningrad, which has two schools of its own. Entrance examinations are held on the premises except for those from the Central Asian republics, who attend for drawing and painting but who take the written

papers locally in their national languages. Many of the students are gold medallists from their secondary schools—a distinction which carries the right to choose at which institute to continue studying. The entrance examination is mainly in drawing, the other subjects being all non-architectural and general in scope—mathematics is only taken orally. Applicants also have an interview with a reception Commission.

The course lasts six years. The main subject headings are design, building construction, art and sculpture, and general education, which extends throughout the course and includes a free choice between English, French and German. Each lecture is followed by some practical work related to it. The institute further organises practical work in the long vacations—in the first two years one month's stonework and one month's metalwork. In the next two years, students spend a month each summer on building sites as "middle technical personnel"—work organised by the institute, which provides return fares to the project and salaries. At the end of the fifth year, eight weeks are spent in a projecting organisation, with a longer holiday before starting the final thesis year, in which students specialise in industrial housing or town-planning fields.

The academic work in the first year showed a very close study of world art and architecture, particularly of the Classical and Renaissance period, a standard of draughtsmanship in the drawings from nature that it would be hard to find in any similar school in England, and an absence of design projects. Building materials are studied and it is not till the second year that a simple architectural problem is set. Lectures on building construction now progress with more complicated studio work—usually four design projects in the year, as well as numbers of study sheets of construction. Proper working drawings are only prepared for one design in the course. The thesis in the second half of the last year is only taken to design stage. Particularly interesting is the careful study in the fourth year of site organisation and the planning of the use of mechanical equipment.

The school is very fortunate in the numbers of practising architects on the staff. All are doing outside work except the director and the deans of the senior and junior schools. Many outstanding architects and specialists teach there, including Poliakov, for example, who has done a number of Metro stations and the architectural work on the Volga-Don canal and for the Kuibyshev hydro-electric station. Staff are expected to spend 600 hours a year lecturing or in the studios. There are three teachers to every group of students, and five groups to the year.

At the Academy in Leningrad similarly high standards of draughtsmanship and design on the basis of classicism are reached. But here the students have the advantage of working side by side with artists and sculptors. They share a hostel, and the students' club often organises joint competitions. At this Academy, with its spacious Renaissance building which forms part of the dignified waterfront to the Neva, it is the architect-artist, rather than the architect-engineer, that is trained.

From brief visits to these two schools certain general ideas of architectural education in the Soviet Union emerge. What is chiefly surprising to someone from England is that the methods of teaching and the approach are still to a large extent what they were in 1912, when one of the present professors at the Moscow Institute graduated. On the firm basis of architectural theory which forms the early part of the course, it has obviously been possible for the students to adapt themselves to social and stylistic changes, and to functional requirements that are frequently new and exciting, and now to develop, in the present period of "creative research" through which Soviet architecture is passing, the traditional forms of their many nationalities.

OUR "cultural delegation" numbered a round dozen and represented a variety of cultural interests, including the theatre, education, literature, journalism, art, archæology, psychiatry, and science. The delegation was largely sponsored by the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR, but I owe my own inclusion in the party to an invitation from the Scotland-USSR Friendship Society.

It so happened that the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation was in session during our stay, and at short notice seats in the front row of the public gallery in the Kremlin were provided for us and we heard the Budget speech of the Minister of Finance. Several of the national leaders were present, including Mr. Malenkov and Mr. Molotov. We were also afforded the opportunity to see the palaces and museums of the Kremlin, with their considerable collection of treasures.

The main streets of Moscow are impressively wide and lined with massive modern buildings. Some of the squares, including that on which our hotel faced, are truly colossal. Since the war five or six multi-storeyed buildings have been erected in Moscow, and there are to be eight of these in all. One of them is the new university building on the south-west outskirts of the city, two will be hotels (of which one is nearing completion), two are administrative buildings, and the remaining three contain residential accommodation.

For me, the most interesting of these multi-storeyed buildings was the new university, the building of which has occupied four years. Classes began there at the beginning of September and we saw the students at work. Although it has 45,000 rooms it houses only the natural science faculties, and additional buildings will be needed for the other departments of study. In two wings there is attractive accommodation for nearly 6,000 students, who pay only a nominal charge (about 7s. 6d. per month), which covers all except food.

The main building is thirty-six storeys high, of which ten are occupied by the "faculty" of geology, and the main vestibules and halls are in marble, with rich carpets and cut-glass chandeliers.

Although I have seen university buildings in North and South America as well as in Europe, India, Pakistan, and Ceylon, I have never seen anything approaching this new Moscow University in either size or magnificence. I had a most absorbing talk with the chief architect, who was justly proud of his achievement, and had interesting ideas as to the influence on a student of his environment.

Another of the sights of Moscow is the celebrated Metro. We spent some hours travelling on the recently opened "circle" line and inspecting its stations, each one separately designed by its own architect to illustrate some theme. Each station consists of a long hall with arched walls on either side opening on to the platforms, and constructed in coloured marbles with illustrations in mosaic and sculpture and attractive lighting effects. Inspection of some of the stations built earlier showed how advances had been made in the design and ventilation of the stations and in the colour schemes for the trains.

I could not have imagined in advance that a morning spent in an underground railway would have been such a fascinating and agreeable experience.

At no time during our stay in the Soviet Union were our movements subjected to any restraint, nor were we kept under surveillance. We were free to leave our hotels as we wished, and in fact several of my companions went unaccompanied to visit friends and colleagues. This was easy in the case of one of them who spoke Russian fluently. Four of us ventured one afternoon by Metro to Gorky Park, where we spent an interesting hour examining the various forms of outdoor recreation and entertainment provided for the city dwellers.

On another occasion I spent a couple of hours browsing alone in the shops

in two of the principal shopping centres of Moscow. Most of the shops were thronged with people and were also well stocked with goods. If one regards a rouble as equivalent to about sixpence, then many foodstuffs cost about as much as here, although chocolate is very expensive; other commodities, such as books, are very cheap by our standards, and yet others, including shoes and clothes, are rather expensive.

Leningrad is a beautiful city, with a charm and elegance that Moscow lacks. This applies particularly to the buildings and gardens which line both banks of the wide river. The buildings on the right bank include the University and the Academy of Sciences; the most impressive of those on the left bank is the vast Winter Palace, which houses the renowned Hermitage Museum.

In the university I had a long discussion with some of my chemical colleagues and saw the museum dedicated to the memory of the great Russian chemist, Mendeléev, the originator of the Periodic Classification of the chemical elements. The museum contains his study, with his writing table and his books, just as they were when he used them. There was a copy of the first edition of his *Principles of Chemistry*, interleaved with blank pages and annotated by him.

I also saw a large folio containing more than a hundred diplomas of membership of learned academies and of honorary degrees conferred on Mendeléev. Among them was a letter from the Clerk of the Senate of Glasgow University inviting Mendeléev to come to Glasgow to receive the degree of LL.D., on an occasion when Sir William Ramsay would give an address on "The Life of Joseph Black" (this was in 1904).

The four hours which we spent in the Hermitage Museum was far too little in which to see all its treasures. The pictures included works by many famous old masters (Italian, Dutch, Flemish, Spanish, and English schools—works of the Russian painters are housed in a separate gallery and many of them show a marked French influence).

The war-damaged areas on the south side of Leningrad had all been rebuilt and we found there many large new apartment buildings, spaciouly laid out, and in their vicinity a well-kept park. To the north of Leningrad near the seashore we saw a splendid new stadium with seating accommodation for about 100,000 people.

In the industrial area on the east side of Leningrad we visited a turbine factory. It was not a new factory and there was nothing particularly noteworthy about it, except, perhaps, in the insight it gave us into the provisions made for the education and training of the workers and for the care of their children. Attached to the factory is a school at which young workers can make up deficiencies in their general education and also a "Tekhnikum" and an "Institute" at which technical training and higher education respectively are provided. Payment to the workers is on a piece-work basis, and the working week is normally forty-eight hours. We learned that a skilled worker may earn from 2,000 to 3,500 roubles a month (about £50 to £90). There is keen competition among teams of workers for the honour of having achieved the highest output.

It was in Leningrad that we first encountered the Pioneer movement, when we visited the Palace of Pioneers there. It was literally a palace, having been formerly a royal residence. There are palaces and houses for Pioneers in towns and villages throughout the Soviet Union. Pioneers wear distinctive red neckerchiefs, and we realised from subsequent visits to schools that most of the children are Pioneers. Membership is limited to children between nine and fourteen years of age, but all children of school age (which extends to seventeen years in the "middle schools") may attend the palaces of Pioneers.

There are numerous study circles—as many as 700 in the Leningrad palace, which has 6,000 members—and these are held out of school hours. As

the pupils in most schools attend in two shifts this means in effect that a proportion of children will be free in the morning or afternoon as well as the evening. There is no overlap with the school curricula, and we saw a puppet theatre performance of very high standard by children who make the dolls and also perform with them. We saw, too, many examples of excellent handicraft of various kinds, and some fine electrically operated models of machinery and mechanical equipment.

There were examples of other models which are made in the palace and supplied to schools as equipment to illustrate various scientific principles. We also heard a good deal about the Pioneers' camps which are held in the country in the summer, and saw photographs of the children engaged in a variety of enjoyable outdoor activities at one of these camps.

Soon after our arrival in Moscow we met our hosts in order to draw up a programme. One of the desires which most of us expressed was to be enabled to visit one of the republics of Central Asia. After some discussion of what was feasible we agreed to go to Stalinabad, the capital of Tadzhikistan, which has frontiers with Afghanistan, Kashmir, and China.

Within a few days nine of us, with three interpreters, were flown about 2,000 miles to Stalinabad, a city which lies in a high valley surrounded by hills and high mountains. Hotels were either meagre or entirely lacking, for we were accommodated in rather cramped but comfortable quarters in a rest house in pleasant grounds.

At a concert in a very fine new theatre we were introduced to Tadzhik music and dancing. We visited the university (which was founded five years ago and has 1,500 students) and a middle school (one of our party went also to a dozen other schools in Stalinabad and Tashkent and was satisfied that the excellent conditions we saw were not exceptional).

Two of us visited the Medical Institute (for medical education) which is named after Avicenna, the famous Tadzhik physician and philosopher who was born in Bokhara nearly 1,000 years ago. In ten years the institute has produced more than 1,000 doctors. The organisation of the teaching of medical students seemed very similar to the system here, and the associated hospital would have done credit to any western country.

Just outside Stalinabad we visited the Stalin collective farm, on which there are 2,658 families, with a total of 15,140 people. We were given detailed information about the size and activities of the farm and were shown the buildings where social and cultural facilities are provided, one of the twenty schools, the farmers' houses (including an interior), and one of the shops. Our visit to the collective farms concluded with a magnificent feast and each of us was presented with the Tadzhik national costume of brightly coloured silk gown and embroidered cap. The people there were clearly overjoyed to be visited by a British delegation and their hospitality and kindness to us were very moving.

During our return journey to Moscow we spent a day and a half in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan and a city of 700,000 inhabitants. We visited the University of Central Asia, a teachers' training college, and an agricultural research institute. I was rather struck by a comment made in the teachers' training college that Soviet pedagogical science is based on the theory that there are no inherently backward children. This seemed to me a revealing comment.

On the eve of our departure from Moscow to return home we were given a reception and party by our hosts. This was a most enjoyable occasion and I was much struck by the atmosphere of warm friendliness. We had been well looked after by our guides and interpreters. Everything possible had been done for our comfort and no pains had been spared to ensure that we should see as

much as possible of life and culture in the Soviet Union, and that all our wishes should be met as fully as was practicable within the available time.

Building Technique in the USSR

C. C. Handyside

The author wishes to explain that during the tour a distance of about ten thousand miles was covered and much of the time was spent in looking at old buildings, schools of architecture, parks, and so on. The time available for studying present-day building was, therefore, too little for him to do more than get general impressions, based on quick glimpses of a number of buildings and visits to a few building sites.

PERHAPS the most important single factor, which seemed to operate in all the towns we visited, was that almost all building work is on a large scale, mainly on large blocks of flats of heights varying from six to fourteen storeys. This results in, or at least makes convenient, the use of a small number of large building organisations—a condition quite different from that in England. Possibly, this type of organisation and this type of building programme is also one of the main reasons for the extremely large number of cranes to be seen wherever work is in progress.

The cranes around most new buildings are mostly of the tower type, on fixed rail runs. We saw twenty-two of these cranes around two new blocks of flats during our journey from the Moscow airport into the city. This is rather exceptional, but most building sites in Moscow seem to have at least two and nearly always more, cranes. In other towns, such as Stalingrad, Kiev and Leningrad, similar tower cranes are in use, but not, apparently, in such numbers—it being more usual to see two, and sometimes only one, per building. These cranes are available in a number of types and of varying size, but the ones we saw being used on a fourteen-storey block of Moscow flats were fifty-four metres high, with a reach of thirty-four metres and a capacity of five tons.*

Alongside the great scale of the work, and the apparent high degree of mechanisation, it is important to set one other main factor in order to appreciate the general situation. A very large proportion of the building labour is female and often consists of untrained or partly trained peasant women only recently introduced to towns and to building work.

Except on “key” jobs, such as the Moscow Metro and the new University building, the standard of craftsmanship is very low indeed. On some work, such as brickwork later to be covered up, the lack of attention to quality is probably justified by the greater output achieved and, since the quality is sufficient for strength, it is adequate. In the UK, we may, in fact, waste time and money on an unnecessarily high standard of finish in parts of our buildings. On the other hand, the very poor quality of *finishes* is hardly satisfactory, though it may well be an inevitable result of a vast programme of fast building with a limited skilled labour force.

All the workers are on some kind of bonus-for-results system of payment, and many of them appear to be able to exceed their “targets” by as much as 200 or 300 per cent. (To what extent this is causing the poor standard of finishes we were not able to discover during our hurried visits to building sites.) At the entrance to a site it is quite usual to see a large board on which the output records of the building “gangs” are shown.

An exception to the general standard of craftsmanship is the work we saw in Erevan, the capital of Armenia, where the quality was generally good, and the stone carving and metalwork of a very high standard indeed.

In view of the obvious shortage of skilled labour for the enormous pro-

*See ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL Vol. XII, No. 3, for illustrated article on building techniques.

gramme of new building, it is especially noteworthy that very fine restoration work is being carried out in all the towns we visited. This restoration work is on such an enormous scale, and generally of such a good standard of craftsmanship, that it must absorb a considerable number of skilled workers who can ill be spared. We saw restoration work in progress inside the Kremlin, on churches and other old buildings in Kiev, on many of the magnificent eighteenth-century buildings in the centre of Leningrad and on the summer palaces outside Leningrad, which were almost completely destroyed during the war. At Peterhof, for example, the palace facade has already been rebuilt and the superb fountains restored, including the long water supply line which feeds the fountains with a permanent pressure supply from distant hills. Of particular note is the great care being taken to restore mosaics and frescoes, and, in the art galleries, the considerable amount of careful cleaning of old paintings that is being carried out.

Also worth special mention is the impressive Museum of Building Construction in Moscow. This is a very large and well-set-out permanent exhibition of building materials and building technique—something like a much larger version of our Building Centre, but with more building plant and building methods displayed, and, of course, without any “commercial” exhibits. Apart from its size and the well-displayed material, we noted that individuals and parties of building workers visit the exhibition in fair numbers, that the staff includes a considerable number of people who are experts in specialised subjects and who can answer fairly detailed and difficult technical questions, and that an offshoot of the main exhibition is set out in another part of Moscow—in a park. Here, an avenue some hundreds of yards long is lined with exhibits, including full-scale examples of new methods of construction and a great deal of building plant, such as cranes, etc. All this is open to the public and semi-permanent in character, and of considerable interest to the people. This is an idea which might well be copied in other countries.

Except in the relatively small number of very high buildings in Moscow and in a few industrial buildings there is virtually no sign of steel frame construction in new work and we saw very little *in situ* reinforced concrete work. At present, most buildings up to fourteen storeys high are being built with solid load-bearing brick walls. However, this system is now regarded as out of date and the use of a system of precast concrete framing is likely to become general. The r.c. frames consist of precast units, each two storeys high. We saw examples of this system of construction in the Museum of Building and some members of our party visited a job where it was being used. On that site, the frames were cast on the ground and then lifted into position, but large new factories are being built for the production of these frames and other r.c. units.

Both in r.c. frame construction and in buildings with solid walls, floors are of precast concrete units. Sometimes these are about 3ft. wide, spanning from the outer walls to a central spine wall, but the tendency appears to be towards using a very large floor unit of full room size, up to 6.40 metres by 3.60 metres, and weighing over two tons.

Stair flights are nearly always of single precast concrete units, often complete with granolithic finish, although this is often insufficiently protected to prevent a good deal of damage during subsequent work.

Foundations to the buildings with brick walls which we saw under construction were mostly of large precast concrete units. Details of these were not noted at the time, but, as far as the author can recollect, they are about 5ft. by 1ft. on plan, being laid side by side, with their length across the width of the foundation trench.

So many stories have been heard about high rates of bricklaying in the Soviet Union that a special attempt was made to obtain some reliable figures. It must first be realised that Soviet brickwork, as we saw it on most of the

solid wall types of flat block, is something quite different from what we usually mean by the word. Virtually none of it is face work, and the walls are very thick—on high blocks about 2ft. at the top and 3ft. to 3ft. 6in. at the base. Bricks are about 9½in. by 4¾in. by 2¾in. and a high proportion of them are of the “perforated” type, similar to those so often seen on the Continent. Both clay and sand-lime bricks are used—often both types in the same wall. The walls we saw appeared to be fairly perpendicular, but mortar joints varied greatly in thickness and obviously no great trouble was taken to keep courses level, or to fill the joints particularly carefully. Walls between flats were said to be normally 1½ bricks thick for sound insulation.

Bricks are transported in metal wire cages, each cage containing about ninety bricks. They are packed at the kilns and transported to the site, where the cage is hoisted by crane into the required position. Mortar is hoisted in skips. External scaffolding is not used, and all brickwork is laid “overhand.”

A brickwork team usually consists of five people—two men, who do the actual laying, and three women. One woman shovels mortar from the skip on to the wall and roughly levels the bed with her shovel. The other two unload the bricks and place them on the wall roughly in position. The male bricklayers merely move the bricks to their final position, one working on the outer half of the walling and one on the inner, using trowels to give the mortar bed a somewhat better level.

Output for a team of five working in this way on fairly straightforward walling 2-3ft. thick on a job we saw in Moscow was in the region of 4,000 to 4,500 bricks per eight-hour day. We were told that a good team can go up to 8,000 per day and that the maximum is about 12,000 per day per team. On similar work on a job in Leningrad we were told that the “target”, or basic rate, was 5,000 per day and that the rates being achieved on the site were about 7,500, again per eight-hour day.

Considering the fine appearance of the exposed brickwork of the huge wall around the Kremlin, we were disappointed to see very little other work in brick facings. There are a few rather hideous late nineteenth-century brick-faced buildings, but hardly a single recent building was designed for brick facing. Most of the buildings put up since the war have been designed for external rendering, although often, in order to obtain quick occupation, the rendering is not done until some time after the building is otherwise completed. In a number of not very old buildings the rendering is showing signs of cracking and deterioration.

There seems to be a strong move towards the use of other facing materials and many brick-walled buildings are now being finished in glazed ceramic slabs. These are usually between 9in. and 18in. high and up to 27in. long. They have a projecting nib, 3in. deep, along their bottom edge, which is built into the brickwork as the wall goes up. These slabs are usually buff in colour, and, although more than one shade of this colour is used, the overall effect seems rather featureless.

In some towns, notably in Kiev, decorated faience tiles are used. The result, in the opinion of at least several of our party, is highly unpleasant—not so much because of the material, but because of the crude designs of most of the decoration and the way in which it is used over large areas of walling.

We saw a few examples of textured precast concrete external wall units, and it seems that this type of finish is likely to become more generally used when the new precast concrete factories get into production. Some slabs of this kind that we saw in Leningrad were 1½in. thick and about 3ft. by 2ft. on face.

One cannot leave the subject of wall finishes without mentioning the really beautiful tufa stone walling we saw on all the new work in Erevan. This stone, in moderate-sized pieces, is obtainable in a variety of colours, including deep

buff, browns, pink, and, in one variety, almost purple. It has a beautiful texture ; yet it can be carved with fine detail. In Erevan, incidentally, not all the new building is in large blocks of flats ; we saw there some very attractive smaller blocks of flats and houses.

In the Moscow Metro, the circulation areas of Moscow University and a number of other public buildings and monuments, a great variety of beautiful marbles have been used for floors, columns and wall facing. We also saw imitation marbling on plaster walls which was so well done that it was difficult to decide whether it was real or not. On the important buildings the general standard of finishes is good, and we saw some particularly good craftsmanship in decorated plaster ceilings. In the Metro there is also some very fine craftsmanship in panels of coloured glazed ceramic.

All floors in flats are of wood, usually soft wood blocks, though in some cases $\frac{3}{4}$ in. t. and g. boarding is used over a rough boarded sub-floor. Walls of rooms are nearly always papered, in rather flowery patterned paper, and tenants are not given a choice of pattern. On most walls this paper is fixed direct on to unplastered plasterboard. Plasterboard joints are taped and the plasterboard itself is often fixed to the walling with gypsum adhesive. Plastering is usually confined to staircase walls and window reveals, and there is always a precast decorated plaster cornice and a plaster centre piece from which the main room light is hung. Our hosts were quite shocked to learn that we no longer regard a decorated cornice as essential to a living room.

Flat roofs appear to be out of fashion and were said to be unsuitable for snow. Pitched roofs are almost all covered with large flat sheets of very thin cast iron. This, painted, appears to be a traditional material, but developments have taken place and there is now a special system of manufacture in which the sheets are "oiled" immediately after casting. This apparently provides a material which does not need painting ; it is cheaper than a galvanised finish and is believed to have a twenty-year life. The sheets are about 4ft. or 6ft. long and 2ft. wide, with interlocking joints between them.

Information about the speed of building work was a little confusing. The enormous university building in Moscow was apparently built in three years. Considering its size, this appears phenomenally fast.

Ordinary blocks of flats are built at varying speeds. Six months for an eight- or ten-storey block seems to be considered a fairly common target, but a nine-storey block of 140 flats which we saw in Leningrad had taken fifteen months, while the very large twelve/fourteen-storey block of over 600 flats near the Moscow University, which is considered an "urgent" job, looks like taking eighteen months. On this last job, where nine cranes are in use, there were 980 workers on the day of our visit (when the building was mainly up to roof level, with its lower storeys almost complete). The labour force early in the job was about 500 and it is expected to rise to about 2,000 towards the end of the job. The size of the building is 230,000 cu. metres.

Concrete placing from central mixing depots was described to us and it was said that mixed concrete was pumped for a distance of over half a mile.

A somewhat unusual development which we saw at the building exhibition was "melted stone". Both basalt and limestone have been used in this way—the stone is melted at high temperature and then cast, sometimes into floor tiles, sometimes into pipes, and sometimes into decorative units. This seems to be a recent development, but some very large statues high up on the university building were made by joining together large numbers of pieces of limestone cast to special shapes in this way. The advantage claimed for the use of cast limestone for these statues is that they will remain unchanged in colour in spite of exposure. Great hardness and resistance to chemicals appear to be the advantages of the cast basalt floor tiles and pipes.

Glass pipes for domestic drain stack pipes were seen at the exhibition, the

pipes being made either by spinning or by vertical drawing. Jointing is by sleeves with rubber gaskets. An interesting detail we noted was that although plumbing services in some hotels seemed rather rough-and-ready, the flushing systems to w.c.s always worked well and easily.

Heating to all blocks of flats is from a central plant, often from a district heating system run from a combined heat/electric power station. There seems to be a flat-rate charge for heating, based on the floor area of the flat. Heat meters are not used. In Stalingrad, natural gas is used for cooking and for hot water services in some flats.

Refuse is disposed of by chutes from kitchens to basement collection cars. The Garchy system is being considered, but has not yet been tried.

Work is mostly on a large scale and, on the whole, is being done faster per building than is normal in this country, though at the expense of the quality of the finishes. Mechanisation, i.e. the use of large plant, such as cranes, and small tools, is common, but much work is done by unskilled or semi-skilled labour, which appears to be much more numerous for the size of building than we would employ.

Most work at present under construction is done in a traditional manner, but there are considerable signs that a big change is coming, mainly in the direction of large precast concrete construction, with units standardised and factory made.

Glazed ceramic wall finishes are being introduced widely for external facings. Facing bricks are scarcely ever used. Although there is clearly a good deal of research and experiment going on, there is little sign of any startling new developments in materials or constructional methods.

Building sites appear to be even more untidy than ours usually are and we received the impression that breakages and damage during building must be a source of much wastage.

The information in this article was obtained from a limited number of very hasty visits to building sites and so on. Also, the difficulties of interpretation were sometimes considerable. It is hoped that what has been reported is correct, but under the circumstances some errors or misunderstandings may well have occurred. It is regretted if such has, in fact, been the case and an apology is offered to any of our Russian architect hosts if what they said has been misreported. Wherever we went they did their best to explain what was going on and were always ready to answer our many questions. It is hoped that it will be possible for a return party to visit this country for a further exchange of information and ideas.

Brief Impression

Nares Craig

THE tremendous scale of Soviet building and reconstruction is apparent everywhere. The great apartment blocks are placed well apart and their entrance halls and flats are spacious. The many parks and city gardens cover very large areas. The streets, bridges and embankments are immensely broad and impressive. There is nothing cramped about the Moscow Underground, which has beautiful waiting halls at each station.

This expansiveness everywhere, together with the widespread attention to architectural detail, produces an environment of dignity worthy of the great cultural development that is taking place in the USSR today. It is clear that the people are as proud and fond of their parks and public buildings as of their own homes.

The scope of their projects is well illustrated by the plans for the south-west district of Moscow. By 1960 this area will be transformed. The river will be broadened to twice its present width and bridges built to carry new highways direct from the city centre to the Lenin Hills. Here, surrounding the great new

University, a new residential area with homes for a quarter of a million people will be created, complete with parks, shops, underground garages, theatres, cinemas, hospitals, clinics, health centres and a host of other social buildings.

Excluding parks, this new development will be at densities up to 280 per acre, but buildings will cover only 17% of the land. The apartment blocks will be almost entirely eight to ten storeys ; they believe that "mixed development" is impracticable in big cities. When faced with the old problem of whether to spread or rise they have firmly chosen the latter—but with plenty of open space.

Building production is at the same high rate throughout the Soviet Union. They are now building approximately one and a half million new dwellings annually, of which over a quarter are individual houses, together with a liberal supply of social buildings and, of course, the tremendous civil engineering projects. The truly remarkable restoration of historic buildings on a wide scale also represents a considerable building effort.

Housing in the Soviet Union is not financed by loans requiring repayment with interest. The necessary capital is provided for in budget expenditure and written off. When I pointed out that this was the way we paid for battleships, for example, one of their architects replied : "I see ; we find houses more useful." Only upkeep, lifts, lighting, and so on, have therefore to be paid for, which permits rents to be kept to about 5% of the tenant's income (not of the whole family income). It seems common to spend more on cigarettes than rent, and hot water and central heating charges are nominal.

Soviet architects consider that "modern" ("constructivist") architecture is "cosmopolitan" and cannot express national characteristics. They never pretend, however, to have found the ideal solution to the question of style. Designs for future buildings show that they will develop more simplicity while retaining the classical feeling. But I can well understand that they would have found it well-nigh impossible to express the historical achievements of the consolidation of socialism and the defeat of fascism through the modern idiom as we know it. Also, whatever we architects think (and have we thought enough ?) it is clear, from discussions I have had since returning with their beautiful photographs, that ordinary people in this country admire their recent buildings as much as the Soviet people evidently do.

To maintain their very high output the apartment blocks are almost always prefabricated, with a choice of a number of standard flat plans. The architects are therefore concerned primarily with elevation treatments and layout, which they handle with great attention to detail. Their production of high-grade drawings is prolific although they have only some two-thirds of our number of architects serving four times our population. The flats are quite satisfactory, but could, in my opinion, be improved considerably if more emphasis was placed on detailed planning and measures to permit of more elasticity within the necessary limits of prefabrication.

Factories near Moscow and Leningrad, each consuming 400,000 tons of concrete annually, will soon be producing vast quantities of prefabricated units. These will include prestressed cellular floor and ceiling slabs separated by sound-deadening springs, landings, stairs, vent blocks, foundation slabs, and so on. Building work is concentrated as far as possible to facilitate materials supply, and site prefabrication is often arranged for a group of blocks. Pumping of concrete, mortar and plaster over considerable distances from site mixing-plants and up to the appropriate craftsmen through hoses is common practice. With their wealth of great cranes and other mechanical equipment, Soviet building sites resemble shipyards humming with activity. It is a joy to watch bricks being delivered two hundred at a time direct to the brickie's elbow in quick-release steel clamps which are then returned to the kilns for replenish-

ing. Temporary cages are installed in the numerous lift-shafts to take workers and lighter materials, and power hand-tools are widely used.

Such a degree of prefabrication and site mechanisation leads to a high proportion of craftsmen and low site labour costs. In spite of good earnings, erection costs appear to divide approximately into : materials, 60% ; labour, 15% ; machinery and overheads, 15%. Site foremen are by no means satisfied with the quality of craftsmanship. A background of recent feudalism and appalling war losses is not an easy one on which to build a skilled labour-force adequate to their vast programmes. But good training in free full-time schools and on the sites is steadily raising the standard of finishes.

Perhaps the most stimulating experience for a technician is to see the broad, positive approach they are able to take to all planning and technical problems—free of frustrations and delays. Academician Rudinev, himself criticising the entrance to the new university, apologised for it and said : “ The next time I design a university I will do better.” We laughed. But in the light of such huge, complex buildings being completed within four years, the prospect of one architect (even at seventy !) designing more than one great project in a lifetime becomes in fact a practical reality. On and off building sites we noticed numerous applications of new ideas put quickly into use ; and their originators had been well rewarded.

Their enthusiasm was evident on the faces of the workers we saw and talked with. It was well expressed by a Stalingrad dam worker who said, modestly but with absolute conviction : “ We Soviet workers can do anything.” It was also shown by a girl surveyor, 150 feet up on a Moscow block, who dropped her notebook and seized a crowbar to assist three men in trouble with a stanchion.

Seeing these tremendous feats of reconstruction and new building in a country so recently devastated by war, one could well understand why their conversations so often ended : “ Tell your people what we are doing ; tell them we only want peace.”

City Planning and Architecture

F. P. Tindall

THE best physical planning projects in the Soviet Union are without doubt the great construction schemes which are “ transforming nature ”. These are changing land-use over vast areas and as far as one can judge are well-integrated schemes based on a full appreciation of the scientific and economic problems involved and on the results of many pilot experiments. In carrying out these projects, the Russians are using machines and techniques which are in advance of anything employed in this country.

This article, however, must be limited to the city planning* and architecture, and primarily to that of the European part of the Union, for Armenia, which we also visited, has a different climatic and cultural background and prides itself on a different approach to its problems from that of Moscow.

The planning organisation in Moscow is as follows and it is similar, though the scale varies, in the other cities. There is a large central office under Academician Vlassov, responsible to the Moscow City Soviet. There are fifteen sections under him ; one dealing with the overall planning of the City, the second dealing with planning standards, and thirteen ateliers. The City is subdivided radially between these ateliers, but one deals solely with the ring road sector. Each atelier has sufficient planners, architects, engineers, surveyors and specialists to prepare full working details for each project. Design is the responsibility of each atelier chief, and Mr. Vlassov himself headed atelier number three, which deals with the south-western sector, including the Kremlin, Moscow River and the new university quarter.

* Mr. Tindall is County Planning Officer for East Lothian.—*Ed.*

These ateliers do not design all the buildings in their sector, as most of the Ministries have their own architectural departments which design buildings, including houses, for the enterprises which they control ; but the ateliers do an enormous amount of work not only for the Moscow Soviet but also for trade unions and private individuals, who can apply for a site and an architect from the atelier. Private building is encouraged and much is done on a self-build basis.

Building organisations are run by the City, by Ministries and by trade unions or other groups and they are managed in the same way as direct labour forces in this country. The building-materials industries are organised separately from building construction. Both are highly mechanised and integrated. Several tower cranes are used on each site and collapsible metal skips are loaded with bricks at the kilns and raised to the bricklayers on the job. They have a large labour force at their disposal and on a fourteen-storey block of flats of load-bearing brick construction they had about three times as many workers as would be expected in this country. Sixty per cent of these were women, who do all trades and have the same piece-work rates as men.

The building-materials industry has benefited from the research work of production engineers ; we saw a pre-stressed floor slab twenty feet by ten feet made in two layers with springs and insulation between, and parquet flooring finish on top. A system using similar large finished wall units has been invented by Professor Zholovsky, one of the atelier chiefs, and is now going into production. After many consultations at all levels production targets and projects for the five-year plan are fixed, and once a project has found its place in the plan it has a guarantee of finance, materials, and labour, and completion dates are publicised for all large projects.

Final plans of these are subject to a great deal of critical examination by the public, the local architects' organisation and, if necessary, the Moscow Academy of Arts. Criticism is never resented and we saw several jobs which had been halted by adverse local comment. But mainly of course the emphasis was on speed to comply with fantastically short target dates, and time was of greater importance to them than cost. With such an organisation and industry behind them and the urgent need for accommodation resulting from the war, the swollen city populations and the poor stock of pre-revolution housing, the Soviet architects are working on a vast scale. Their units in Moscow are 14/16-storey blocks ; in Leningrad and Kiev 8/10-storey blocks and in Stalin-grad 6/8-storey blocks, with " high buildings " for points of emphasis.

The Russian approach to city planning was an essentially architectural one, and it is symptomatic that their Town Planning Institute has been amalgamated with the architectural organisations. Architects study town planning as a post-graduate course and for the rest they depend on specialist advisers. City planners, as far as they have non-architectural jobs, are responsible for laying down standards, but it is the architects who finally advise on what should be built—the number of shops, schools, houses of different sizes, and so on.

The architectural conception is a system of avenues leading to high buildings placed for architectural effect rather than for any specific function. Some are houses, some offices or hotels. Leningrad has built, since the war, over five miles of new avenue lined with 8/10-storey blocks. They are complete with all neighbouring facilities—school, kindergartens, crèches, shops and much ornamental open space. The tramway runs down the central reservation and twenty-year-old trees have been transplanted to line the pavements.

Their buildings are as monumental as their layouts. The best architecture is exemplified by their high buildings such as the university. This has been designed as the focal point of a whole new residential area. It is an immense fairy-castle of a building, a central tower with supporting pavilions and four radiating wings. It is faced with ceramic blocks and rosettes and other decora-

tive motives. Inside it is marble and the motives are mainly classical. There are no new spatial conceptions, only the time-scale is new. This vast building, with twice the capacity of Cambridge University, was designed, built and equipped in five years.

The planning of their blocks of flats was, by our standards, very much open to criticism. The building depth was about fifty feet, giving long and narrow rooms ; bathrooms were all internal and kitchens had not been designed to make the housewife's work easy ; and orientation had been ignored. Space standards were similar to ours and the standards of building construction excellent, although finishing and fittings were not. In order to build the maximum number of houses, plans have been standardised to aid prefabrication, and the architect's role reduced to that of a decorator of the exterior elevations. Here they are using classical motives which they say are favoured by the public, but other styles are also used. These ornaments are mainly executed in ceramics or melted and cast limestone. Balconies and bow-windows are also used but mainly as a decorative feature rather than as living space.

Such a short article must tend to bring out the points of difference between our practice and the Russians'. They were aware of the dangers that beset their architectural and stylistic approach to the problems of city planning. In part, this stems from their artistic traditions, in part from the under-development of their light industries, which have moulded western taste to such a high degree, and in part from the very scale and speed of their development as an industrial and urban people.

They are, however, intensely interested in the developments in the west, and nothing but good can come from further exchanges of experience and ideas between the two countries.

Shakespeare, Shaw & Chekhov on the Soviet Stage **John Fernald**

IN the Soviet Theatre today there is a naturalistic style of plays and acting. Everything I saw was exciting and fascinating, with the exception of a rather dated musical. . . . I saw three Chekhov plays. . . . There was a wonderful technique of speaking quietly and realistically. It was as if the players were acting in a room, yet every word could be heard in the largest theatre.

The Seagull : (a Siberian company) A really beautiful performance, though I did notice a lack of relationship between one actor and another. Yet the object of the production was achieved—we were swept into the lives of these people.

The Three Sisters : (Moscow Art Theatre, Nemirovich-Danchenko production) The greatest of all. . . . Some of the players were too old . . . but this did not matter a scrap. They had been playing all these years (since 1938) yet retained the same wonderful reality of the original production. I have never seen anything so good in my life, anywhere. This production had everything—fine acting, creativeness, and glorious use of music. After the comedy scenes, the fourth act enveloped the entire audience in tears. At the end, when the curtain went up again, the Sisters were still in character, tears streaming down their faces. They were not able to get in line to take a call. Some girls from the audience, the kind who wait for film star autographs in this country, threw roses on to the stage. It was all from the heart, all real and spontaneous. Yet the leading players had been three old, rather plain women.

King Lear : (in Leningrad) . . . the King Lear of my imagination in every respect . . . even the smallest parts were played with an amazing feeling for words and meaning . . . the production was old-fashioned and fustian, the scenery ordinary, and an orchestra of fifty playing Beethoven during the perfor-

mance was not to my taste. Yet the acting and the depth of the interpretation made it all exceptionally fine.

Pygmalion : (In Moscow) This was a delicious production with a young and glamorous actress as Eliza. She had tremendous power for one so young. Shaw's wit came over in the same way as here, and the play was given with great integrity.

Profile of Moscow

John Berger

THE first thing one notices, as the plane banks over the outskirts of Moscow, is the new university building. From the air it looks like a model on a sand table in an architect's office : so clean and extensive in its lines, the gardens laid out around it and the roads leading up to it all so much of a piece. In the evening light it appears very slightly pink.

Standing in front of it, it is still difficult to estimate its true scale. "How far away do you think we are from the entrance portico ? " the architect asked.

" Three hundred metres ? "

" No, eight hundred."

It was the second time I had looked down at the city ; for three weeks I had wandered around it, mostly by myself. In the distance towards the country one could see the beginning of the silver birch woods. The landscape around Moscow is gentle and pretty : rather like Corot, but on a much larger scale ; the horizon looks farther away ; and the deeply rutted tracks across the fields of the collective farms look as though they might eventually lead to another province—not, as in England, connecting two paddocks, so familiar and manageable that they are christened with family names.

The suburbs are mostly wooden settlements of one- or two-storey houses. Some are ramshackle, crooked affairs of unplanned logs ; others are a little smarter, with the wood fashioned and fretworked. A little like English village railway stations ; but without the roses, the cosiness : more reminiscent of a township in Australia. The main roads are wide and unfenced, with a good deal of traffic on them, particularly old, upright lorries like pre-war French types. Tracks lead off the main road to the shacks, which are often grouped round a muddy yard. During the day there are far more women about than men. One sees them lifting potatoes, pinning up washing in their yards, leading a goat or feeding chickens. They are dressed like peasants, with many layers of clothes, and scarves tied round their heads. The best way of picturing their faces is to imagine the women in seventeenth-century Dutch portraits, then, as it were, weather them for a generation in the Russian winter, and make their cheeks pinker. Many of the children wear high stockings over their knees and peaked caps which gave them a Dickensian air—only they haven't the pinched faces of the nineteenth century.

Suburbs ? Looking down from the university, one realises that it is the city itself which, despite many historical buildings, appears new, the suburbs ancient. As one approaches the centre, there are more new buildings, more building sites, until in certain areas there are so many cranes that it is like being in a dock. But the appearance of the people doesn't change.

From the roof of the university we could see the gold and white toy towers of the Kremlin, the space of the Red Square, the Lenin Library, like an arsenal—but these one had to look for. What were far more obvious were the new white skyscrapers—some of them flats, others offices. Yet the word is wrong. For skyscrapers imply claustrophobia. And the whole point about the dozen

or so “multi-storey” buildings in Moscow is that they are all placed to cap an *open* prospect. They are the peaks, as it were, to which the foothills—the outlying districts—lead.

Indeed, one of the most noticeable characteristics of Moscow is its sense of spaciousness, of the sky being big, and of the new wide streets, with their huge emporium shops, having been cleared and uncluttered by the wind. You walk, you don’t amble. The roads in the old wooden areas are, of course, narrow ; but then the fact that the houses are so low, and that above them one can nearly always see a wide skyline, prevents any real feeling of confinement. They are more like tents pitched on the upper slopes. (Here I must emphasise that this metaphor of a mountain is only an attempt to pin down the feeling of the place. In fact, Moscow is rather flat.)

In fact, the girls are another thing one notices. Those who do manual work—sweeping the streets, bricklaying, driving buses, working pneumatic drills—remain surprisingly feminine. If anything, more like traditional milk-maids than British women railway porters. Nearly all the others (whether they are or not) look like students. They wear their hair in plaits looped round their heads, little make-up (although at the moment there is a craze for nail varnish) and unselfconscious clothes. Above all, they seem modest, almost demure—a Russian characteristic noticed long before the Revolution. To us they look like the daughters of nineteenth-century country town vicars or schoolmasters : something like the portraits of the Brontës.

Much has been written about the Metro stations. They are all different but they are all like underground banqueting halls—chandeliers, marble, mosaics, sculptures, paintings—as clean as though prepared for a reception. The ticket collectors look like air hostesses : but with short socks, not nylons.

I remembered my friends in London. “The Metro’s all very well. But how do they live ? What about the side streets and the slums ?”

Aspidistras. In nearly every window—particularly in the semi-basement ones—there are aspidistras and rubber plants. Through them one sees small, rather dark rooms, full of ornaments and well-worn furniture : poor farmhouse parlours : cottage rooms : their atmosphere a strange mixture of Hardy and Gogol. Yet the answer to the question isn’t really quite as simple as it seems. A lot of new flats still need to be built. Many obvious consumer goods are only just beginning to come on to the market. The lower-paid workers ought to be paid more. But when all that has been said *and* done, Moscow, by our standards, will still be a city of contrasts.

Lenin used to say that when Communism was achieved, gold would only be used for lavatory seats. But, in fact, gold is for the public, not the private, occasion. The inside of the university is like Xanadu ; Lenin’s tomb—a personal monument—is as severe (although made of red and black marble) as his famous armoured car in Petrograd. You don’t keep up appearances in Moscow, you contribute to them. Or, to put it another way, Stakhanovites take the place of beauty queens. This is something that constantly strikes you. No one dresses to go to the Bolshoi theatre ; but the gilt and red velvet of the auditorium are spotless, and no one thinks of stubbing out a cigarette except in an ash tray. Intellectuals don’t look particularly “intellectual.” People wear their little button-hole Stalin Prize medals very proudly, but don’t worry much about the cut of their suits or cars. And to explain this solely in terms of the shortage of suits and cars is to miss an important point.

Architects' Delegation, September 1953

Nares Craig, A.R.I.B.A. ; R. S. Ellis, L.R.I.B.A., Scottish Special Housing ; C. C. Handisyde, A.R.I.B.A. ; A. D. Jones, F.R.I.B.A., Director of Birmingham School of Architecture ; B. Lubetkin, E.B.A. ; Colin Penn, A.R.I.B.A. (secretary to the delegation) ; F. P. Tindall, M.A., A.M.T.P.I., Chief Planning Officer, East Lothian County Council ; C. R. Whittaker, A.R.I.B.A., President of Architectural Students' Association ; F. R. Yerbury, Hon. A.R.I.B.A., Director of the Building Centre (chairman to the delegation) ; F. R. S. Yorke, F.R.I.B.A., Editor of *Specification*.

Mixed Delegation, August 1953

John Berger, art critic of *New Statesman and Nation* ; Professor V. Gordon Childe, Director of London University Institute of Archaeology ; Professor J. W. Cook, F.R.S., University of Glasgow Regius Professor of Chemistry ; R. Crombie-Saunders, Assistant Editor and Literary Editor of *Glasgow Forward* ; John Fernald actor and theatrical producer ; Alderman W. M. Hyman, Chairman of Education and Youth Committees of West Riding County Council and of Yorkshire Council for Further Education (chairman to the delegation) ; Dr. B. Kirman, consultant psychiatrist (secretary to the delegation) ; Dr. D. Knowles, Liverpool University Lecturer in French ; Miles Malleson, actor and theatrical producer ; Mrs. Ela Reid, special correspondent of *Hindustan Times* ; Herbert Spencer, Editor of *Designers in Britain* and of *Typographica* ; Professor J. S. Spink, Professor of French at Bedford College, University of London.

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Book Reviews

Works, Vols. I, II, III and IV. J. V. Stalin.

(FLPH and Lawrence & Wishart, 1953.
5/- each volume.)

THE publication in English of the first four volumes of Stalin's collected works, covering the years 1901-20, will greatly assist students of modern Russian history. Stalin's writings throw much light upon many aspects of the public life of the period covered, illuminating especially the development of Bolshevik Party policy on a number of major questions.

Outstanding among these is the national question. The articles, speeches and letters gathered in these volumes (many of which have never previously been published in English) reflect fully and clearly both the formation of Bolshevik national policy and the factors which shaped it during the eventful years from the rise of the party in Tsarist times, through the revolutionary upheaval of 1917 to the ending of large-scale hostilities on Russian territory and the *de facto* triumph of the Soviet order. Together with the Bolsheviks' fight against national oppression and for the right of all nations to self-determination, their struggle against separation and for the maximum voluntary unity of the peoples of the old Russian Empire before, during and after the revolution (an aspect of their activity which is, perhaps less well known in the West) can be traced in the pages of these books. We see depicted here the rich experience, and the conclusions drawn from this experience, that went to the making of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics which emerged in the immediately ensuing period (covered by Volume V, not yet available in English).

In an article written in 1904, against Georgian and Armenian nationalists, Stalin explained the programme of the Russian Social-Democratic Party as it related to the national question and sounded the keynote of all his subsequent writings on this subject. Pointing out that the Party called itself "Russian" (*Rossiiskaya*, i.e. covering the whole of the Russian Empire, not merely *Russkaya*), he showed that the programme assumed as the most likely and desirable line of development that a Russian democratic republic would come into being as a unitary, centralised state. At the same time, a clause in the programme allowed for secession by any particular nationally distinct region, should its inhabitants desire this. There could be no question of coercion of any nationality; Social Democrats had the duty, however, to try to ensure by persuasion that every

nationality took the line which accorded best with the interests of the workers' struggle (I, 48-51). Repeatedly in his writings of the pre-revolutionary period Stalin stressed these two points: that besides the right of nations to decide their own fate there was also the duty of the Bolsheviks to endeavour to guide their decisions and not merely to await these as they might come, guided by other forces; and that the maximum unity of the nations of the Russian Empire was to be striven for as one of the conditions best favouring democracy and progress. By no means every national movement was progressive. As an example of a separatist movement which was reactionary, Stalin mentions the "feudal-monarchist 'nationalism'" of the Georgian nobles who wanted to recover "the old privileges and power they had enjoyed under the Georgian kings". This was a nationalism "hounded by realities" (I, 31, 32); the annexation of Georgia to Russia had had progressive results (II, 306) and there was no serious anti-Russian nationalism among the Georgian people (II, 317). Turning from history to possible future developments, should the Azerbaijanians, under the influence of their khans, beys and mullahs, decide to break away from Russia in order to restore "the old order of things" (i.e. as they were before the union with Russia), the Bolsheviks would agitate against this decision and try to persuade the Azerbaijanian people to take a different path (II, 323-4, 369).

After the February Revolution of 1917, in his article "Against Federalism", Stalin opposed schemes which were then current to transform Russia into a federation, a "Union of Regions". While the right to secession must be recognised and a measure of political autonomy established in any case in the nationally distinct regions, it would be a retrograde step to break up the existing unity of Russia. "It is clear to everyone that the regions (border districts) of Russia are *linked* with Central Russia by economic and political ties and that the more democratic Russia becomes the stronger these ties will be" (III, 25-33). At the April Conference of the Bolshevik Party, while noting that the Finns were asking for a separate state and that this should therefore be granted them, Stalin expressed the view that Finland was an exceptional case; nine-tenths of the nationalities would not wish to secede, but would be happy to remain within Russia on the basis of regional autonomy. He personally "would be opposed to the secession of Transcaucasia bearing in mind the common development in Transcaucasia and Russia, certain conditions of the

struggle of the proletariat and so on" (III, 54, 56).

Meanwhile, however, the Provisional Government began to attack and suppress the autonomous institutions which had sprung up in Finland and the Ukraine, thus provoking national enmity and a mood among the peoples concerned of wishing to break their state connection with Russia. Stalin, as Bolshevik spokesman, protested vigorously against this policy. The unity of Russia was most desirable but could only be lasting if voluntary. On their part, the oppressed peoples must not lose sight of their own need to give support to this struggle of the Russian workers who alone were in a position to break the power of the Russian landlords and imperialists. "Either the peoples of Russia support the workers' revolutionary struggle for power, and then they will secure their emancipation; or they do not support it, and then they will no more see their emancipation than the back of their heads" (III, 222-5). Already, sixteen years earlier, he had warned "the oppressed nations of Russia" that they could "not even dream of liberating themselves by their own efforts so long as they are opposed not only by the Russian government but even by the Russian people..." (I, 21).

By its behaviour towards the non-Russian nationalities the Provisional Government created a situation for the Soviet Government to inherit after October 1917 in which it was much harder to maintain the unity of the country than could have been foreseen a few months earlier, a situation in which one of the first tasks of the new government must be to "restore fraternal confidence." Its first step in this direction was to recognise the independence of Finland; although the Finnish Government was a bourgeois one, its demand for independence was supported by the Finnish workers and therefore the Soviet Government had no alternative but to grant it (IV, 3-4, 23-25, 88). At the same time (December 1917) the Soviet Government, through Stalin, made it plain that the conflict in which it had become involved with the bourgeois government then ruling in the Ukraine did not arise from any desire on its part to interfere with Ukrainian national rights. The cause of its quarrel with the Kiev Rada was the help which the latter was rendering to the "white" forces fighting against Soviet Russia by allowing reinforcements to pass across Ukrainian territory to General Kaledin on the Don, while obstructing the movement of Soviet forces against him. The Soviet Government was ready to recognise a national republic in any of the nationally distinct regions, should the people concerned desire it; and on this basis to agree, if need be, to "a federal structure for our

country". This marked an important departure, dictated by changed conditions, from the original Bolshevik opposition to federation (IV, 6-19; see also 32, 33. A hint that such a departure might be made had been first given by Lenin in his *State and Revolution*.)

In April 1918 this new conception received formal expression in our draft constitution for the Russian (*Rossiiskaya*) Socialist Federative Soviet Republic. The nationally distinct regions within the RSFSR, such as Kazakhstan, were to enjoy extensive self-government; military, economic, communications and foreign affairs, however, were to be reserved for the central government (IV, 68-75, 81-83). At this stage the RSFSR was conceived as the all-embracing framework within which all the peoples would find a place who had not, like the Finns, actually broken away; not, as it later became, merely one (though the largest and leading) member of a group of co-equal republics. There was, accordingly, no question of any two-chamber system in this first constitutional plan. A Soviet Republic had replaced the Rada in the Ukraine and Soviet Republics also arose in the Crimea, the Don, Kuban and Terek regions and the Tatar-Bashkir country, and all these became federated units of the RSFSR (IV, 50, 111-113).

This demonstration of Soviet Russia's readiness to adopt a (modified) federal structure, together with their own bitter experience of what separation from Russia meant in terms of economic ruin and impotence to withstand foreign occupation and the restoration of the old régime, produced a strong gravitation by a number of the border peoples towards the RSFSR during the latter half of 1918, expressed in acute political and military crises in the petty states concerned (IV, 96, 97, 234, 235). In its desire for peace and unity, the Soviet Government modified its policy still further in order to meet the national aspirations of all the nationalities. In 1919 the independence of Soviet Byelorussia and that of the three short-lived Soviet republics in the Baltic region was recognised by Moscow, and in 1920 the same status was acknowledged in the case of Soviet Azerbaijan. The treaty of military and economic alliance signed between the RSFSR and Soviet Azerbaijan became the model for similar bilateral treaties with other Soviet republics. These provided for unified direction of the military, economic, communications and foreign affairs of the republics concerned, the existing central organs of the RSFSR taking on the performance of these functions with the aid of representatives of the other republic in each case.

A number of independent Soviet republics linked by treaties with the leading role taken by the RSFSR—this was something quite new and unforeseen before 1917. Writing in October 1920, Stalin was

able to depict the variety and flexibility of "Soviet autonomy", which now ranged from "narrow, administrative" autonomy such as the Chuvashes enjoyed within the RSFSR, through the "wider, political autonomy" of the Tatars (also within the RSFSR) to "contractual relations" such as existed between the RSFSR and Soviet Azerbaijan (IV, 367). The elements later organized into the USSR were already present in embryonic form—autonomous regions, autonomous republics, independent but allied republics. In the last pages of Volume IV we see the application of one or other form of "Soviet autonomy" in the cases of Daghestan (407-411), the North-Caucasian highlanders (412-420) and Armenia (423, 426, 427). The essential means had been worked out whereby the great majority of the peoples of the former Russian Empire could group themselves around the Russian people and under its leadership. Fundamentally, the Constitution of the USSR was a nationalisation and consolidation of these means.

The development of Bolshevik national policy as we see it unfolded in these books stands out as a striking example of that "creative Marxism" (which, while firmly adhering to principle, does not hesitate to learn from life) of which Stalin was so determined and able an exponent throughout his life.

Running all through his writings on the national question in these volumes is Stalin's insistence on the leading role of the Russian people. In 1907 he points out that the main basis of the Bolshevik Party lies among Russian workers (II, 50-52). In April 1918 he notes that Soviet power has become consolidated in the Russian areas but not yet in the border regions "inhabited by culturally backward elements" (IV, 77, 78). One of the tactics adopted by the reactionaries in Transcaucasia at this time is "inciting armed detachments of unenlightened Moslems against the Russian soldiers" who formed the strongest support of the revolutionary movement there (IV, 56-60). In the North Caucasus throughout the civil war, the *inogorodnie*, the non-Cossack Russian inhabitants, act as "loyal sons of Soviet Russia", in contrast to the waverings of both the Cossacks and the Moslem highlanders (IV, 415). The course of military events in the civil war shows again and again that it is "Inner Russia", the home of the workers of Petrograd and Moscow and the peasants influenced by them, which is the impregnable fortress of Soviet rule which cannot be taken by the enemies of the revolution. In whatever other areas they may succeed for a time, and which is the base for the liberation of these other areas (IV, 297-301). Finally, in explaining to the North-Caucasian highlanders the significance of Soviet autonomy, Stalin says that its function is to "help you to become as enlightened as

the workers and peasants of Russia" (IV, 420). When, at the end of the second world war, Stalin praised the Russian people as the most outstanding of the Soviet peoples and the leading force among them he was speaking from an experience and a conviction fed by that experience which went back to the earliest years of the Soviet power, and beyond.

BRIAN PEARCE.

ARCHANGEL

Archangel 1918-19. Field Marshal Lord Ironside. (Constable, 21/-.)

THIS book records one of the most disgraceful and futile of the several campaigns waged against the young Soviet Republic by the Allied Powers of the first world war. "Disgraceful" because it was war without any declaration of war. "Futile" because it completely failed in its objective.

In March-April 1918 (not 1917 as Ironside writes) Allied forces were landed at Murmansk ostensibly to prevent a Finnish-German attack on Murmansk with a view to converting it into a naval base against Allied shipping. No such attack was ever attempted, in fact it was, for reasons of terrain, an impossibility.

In July-August 1918 the Allied forces were in possession of Murmansk, the railway from that port to Soroka and the port of Archangel.

Ironside landed in Archangel, September 30, 1918, and was in supreme command from October 14, 1918, till August 12, 1919, when Lord Rawlinson arrived "to direct the evacuation of all Allied forces in the country".

This book deals with the events, military and other, in this part of Russia from September 30, 1918, till September 28, 1919, when the last troopships left Archangel for Britain.

Students of Colonial campaigns will find the book of interest. It is well written and the details stand out graphically.

Ironside at once discovered, after the Armistice was signed in Western Europe on November 11, 1918, that the Allied Forces wanted to go home. He writes: Archangel now became like a hive of bees, upset by an unwonted hammering from outside. The wireless and cable stations were working overtime with telegrams from Ambassadors and commanders of contingents, all asking for information and instructions. Everywhere there was underlying hope that, even at this late hour, something might happen to save us from our winter campaign."

They could have gone home unmolested had the Supreme Council in Paris cabled the Soviet Government stating that they had decided to withdraw their forces. But the Supreme Council did not want to bring them home. They had decided that Soviet Russia was to be attacked from all points of the compass and that Archangel was to

play an important role in this encircling attack.

Ironside soon found that the local Russians had no desire to fight the Bolsheviks. He writes : "[General] Finlayson [who had been there some time before Ironside arrived] and I had a long talk about the population of the northern region. He was quite definite that he had encountered no desire on the part of the peasants to fight the Bolsheviks. Many were anxious to free their own villages, but to free any other village was of little interest to them. A general desire to oust the Bolsheviks just did not exist."

Despite this unfavourable atmosphere a rough-and-ready kind of conscription was introduced and it looked as though things were going fairly well, but mutiny followed mutiny among the Russian troops. They deserted, taking their arms with them.

As already mentioned, the last transports left Archangel on September 28, 1919. On leaving they left the Archangel "Government", and its Russian forces under General Miller, immense quantities of munitions and supplies.

In conclusion Ironside tells us that these forces "collapsed some three months later under Bolshevik pressure", and of course the "Government" disappeared with them. A disgraceful and futile adventure which cost Britain much in life and treasure, to say nothing of the cost to Soviet Russia and the cost in Russian good will for Britain.

W. P. COATES

STORY WITH *CHASTUSHKI*

Poddubri Songs. S. Antonov. (FLPH, un-priced.)

THIS little book is a new short story, oddly described as a novelette, by the young Soviet writer Antonov. It is a very simple story of Soviet rural youth. At times it is rather moving, though to some of us it may appear a little dull in parts. It has no plot, and Mr. Antonov's style tends to seem laborious and plodding. No doubt this is largely due to unimaginative translation, but it is also attributable to the writer's apparent lack of interest in *individual* characterisation. Several characters in the book do arouse one's interest, but Mr. Antonov sketches them so briefly that they are forgotten by the time one has finished reading the story.

In spite of such faults, however, this is a refreshing piece of work. It is full of humour, and the *Chastushki*, a kind of Soviet calypso, are delightful.

My sweetie loves, but does not kiss ;

His good intents are hidden.

To love a maid and not to kiss

Should be by law forbidden !

Mr. Antonov has a lot to teach those of us who write short stories, although he also has much to learn. What distinguishes him

from many story-writers is his love of people and his obvious sincerity. We could do with more from him. I look forward to his next book.

J.H.

RUSSIAN WITHOUT SMILES

The Structure and Development of Russian.
W. K. Matthews. (Cambridge University Press, 30/-)

PROFESSOR Matthews's book on the Russian language is intended as a manual for university students of philology. Of its three parts the first two (173 pages) deal respectively with the structure and the historical development of literary or standard Russian, the third being a selection of passages to illustrate this development. It is a lucid and scholarly survey, but definitely too concise to give full value to all the important points of the vast subject. The phonetic side is studied in particular detail, and a special chapter, also largely phonetic, concentrates on sometimes very slight divergences of dialects. On the other hand, the aspects of verbs, which play so essential a part in Russian, have only their mechanism outlined with no more than a hint at the rich nuances of orchestration which their correct use communicates to speech. The too general statement that "any prefix attached to a verb of imperfective form makes it perfective" is misleading, for a number of these verbs can take on a variety of prefixes without changing their aspect. The one unhappy exception (No. 29) among the otherwise very good renderings of the selected passages is due to a confusion of two types of perfectives ("have brought home" for "have started to carry home") which has brought in its train other misunderstandings. Thus we miss altogether the poet's picture of children hurrying home from church with lighted tapers and shielding the little flames (not "icon-lights") from the boisterous (not "valiant") wind and rain.

Part two contains many facts of interest for the general reader, but, unless he has some previous acquaintance with the literary and historical background, he will not find it easy to keep up with the swift pace across ten centuries. In connection with the period between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, it is disappointing not to find any mention of the recent discovery in Novgorod of a number of private letters scratched on birch-bark (available in facsimile) which provide good examples of the non-official language of the time and thus fill in an important gap.

Some undertones in Professor Matthews's personal appreciation of things Russian are hardly calculated to kindle any sparks of enthusiasm in the reader's breast. There are somewhat patronising

references to Pushkin's "eclecticism". Expressions of doubt accompany every mention of the *Lay of Prince Igor*, despite the fact that the author himself is obliged to admit that "the majority of serious opinion" favours its authenticity. And on page 158 we are asked to believe, contrary to the verdict of history, that Napoleon's Russian campaign was a Russian "defeat"!

T.S.

MEETING A LONG-FELT WANT

Russian Prose Composition. S. Kononov. (Oxford University Press, 4/6.)

TEACHERS of Russian will gratefully welcome Professor Kononov's selection of passages for translation into Russian. They alone perhaps, can fully appreciate the amount of careful work that has gone into the preparing of this excellent little volume. One would like to hope that it is only the first of a long series, and that it will be soon followed by a key that will double its usefulness.

T.S.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Survey of International Affairs 1938, Vol. 3. R. G. D. Laffan and others. (Geoffrey Cumberlege for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 55/-.)

THIS volume, covering the period from the Munich agreement up to Hitler's occupation of Bohemia and Moravia, is of especial interest in that it contains what is in effect an apologia for the Western Powers' refusal to enter into an alliance with the Soviet Union against Hitler Germany.

Mr. Ashton-Gwatkin, the author of the section on the USSR, admits in almost as many words that such an alliance would have been decisive in averting war. "If Russia were in active alliance with France and Great Britain," he writes, "the German General Staff (whatever the Nazis might say) would never allow Germany again to fall into the grip of a double front."

"Why", he asks, "did Britain not make a firm agreement with the Soviet Government? Why did Britain not solicit their assistance for the Czechs?"

The Soviet Government, in the press and through the mouths of its statesmen, had of course repeatedly and clearly expressed its willingness to go to the assistance of the Czechs.

The answer, declares Mr. Ashton-Gwatkin, is evident. "The USSR appeared to be impotent for any decisive action, militarily and economically insecure, unlikely to implement any promise to help,

concerned with her own safety only, the painted semblance of a Great Power."

And why did the Soviet Union "appear to be impotent"? Mr. Ashton-Gwatkin can do no better than trot out an argument used on occasion by Mr. Neville Chamberlain himself. She was impotent because in a series of trials, culminating in that of the right-wingers Bukharin and Rykov, the Trotskyists Krestinsky, Rosen-goltz and Rakovsky, Yagoda and others, the Soviet people had rid themselves of their potential Fifth Column.

It is not adequate, incidentally, to state baldly, as the author does, that these would-be Quislings "had no counsel to defend them"; three of the accused had counsel; the remainder, in the presence of foreign press and diplomatic representatives, refused counsel, preferring to defend themselves.

Far from being a sign of weakness, of insecurity, these events were a sign of strength, a sign that the Soviet people was determined to defend itself.

Mr. Ashton-Gwatkin also makes great play with another Chamberlainite argument—that the Soviet undertakings were "conditional" and "indeterminate".

This does not bear examination. The operation of the Soviet-Czech Treaty was indeed conditional upon France carrying out her obligations—but in September 1938 the Soviet Government told Dr. Benes that she would come to Czechoslovakia's assistance not merely under the terms of this Treaty, but also as a member of the League of Nations should Czechoslovakia be attacked and appeal to the League Council—a promise not subject to French co-operation.

In the same month, the Czechoslovak Ambassador in Moscow was told by the Soviet Government that the Soviet Government would go to the aid of Czechoslovakia in any circumstances. The only stipulation was that Czechoslovakia should defend herself.

Six months previously Mr. Litvinov had unsuccessfully called for talks between the Soviet, French and Czechoslovak General Staffs.*

We are grudgingly told that there were "some who could see beyond the caricature presentation of wild Bolsheviks"—the author seems unwilling to tell us how numerous and politically varied were those who are thus glibly dismissed as "some". However, the reader cannot but ask, if there were "some" who could see, why could not the British Government?

Perhaps Lord Listowel, writing in the *Manchester Guardian* in July 1938, was not far wrong when he said: "The real root of the trouble is the class prejudice of the wealthy coterie that controls the machinery of government".

It is wholly inadequate to dismiss accounts of the desires of Chamberlain, Halifax and others to abet an attack by

Germany on Soviet Russia as "inventions" of the "Russian imagination".

Lord Halifax, according to documents found in the archives of the German Foreign Office, told Hitler as early as November 1937 that "Germany could rightly be regarded as a bulwark of the West against Bolshevism", and assured him that Britain was only concerned that changes in Eastern Europe should be brought about by "peaceful evolution".

The whole account of this year of shame is full of lessons for us today; unfortunately this blinkered presentation does not draw them.

D. OGDEN

* Several further examples are given in A. Rothstein's "History of the USSR," pp. 257-264.

SIXTEENTH-CENTURY TRADE WITH RUSSIA

The Muscovy Merchants of 1555. T. S. Willan.
(Manchester University Press, 16/-.)

IN 1553 an expedition set out from London to find the north-east passage to the Indies—the source of spices and other valuable raw materials, and a possible market for English cloth. It failed to reach Asia; but through the White Sea connections were established with the Russia of Ivan the Terrible, anxious for trade with the West. Two years later the Russia Company was founded in London to develop new trade.

Dr. Willan's book is a study, largely biographical, of the members of the Russia Company of 1555. It is, therefore, only indirectly about Russia. The Russia Company is important in the development of English capitalism as one of the earliest joint-stock companies. The medieval company was a union of merchants who themselves actually took part in trade with a given area. But few members of the Russia Company themselves travelled to Russia as traders, though one was in Moscow during the Tatar attack of 1571, and escaped only by hiding in the Company's cellar. Most members simply supplied capital, with which the Company traded as a body, employing paid agents and factors. The joint-stock principle, the pooling of capital, looks forward, away from the medieval gild company to the big impersonal capitalist concern, hiring wage-labour and salaried employees.

The merchants were ideologically a forward-looking group too. The Company was founded in the reign of the Catholic "Bloody Mary," but there is an unmistakably Protestant tinge about many of its members. Many had bought confiscated church lands at the Reformation. They left very little to the Church in their wills—except to endow sermons, the specifically Protestant form of religious activity—but much to education. Illuminating for sixteenth-century society is the number of

famous literary names which occur among the 201 members of the Company. There were the fathers of Francis Bacon, John Chamberlain, the letter-writer, Thomas Lodge, Thomas Sackville (author of *A Mirror for Magistrates* and *Gorboduc*), Sir Philip Sidney, and a great-uncle of Sir Henry Wotton. There were also a Quarles, a Randolph, and a Christopher Marler (one of the forms of Marlowe).

In addition to the merchants proper, there was a group of seven peers, eight office-holders, and other knights and gentlemen, whose function was to enlist the support of the not-very-commercially-minded government. In return they got a rentier's rake-off.

Such was the cross-section of English society which initiated trade with Russia—a powerful group representing all that was most advanced in economic organisation, in ideology, and in culture—who were able to win the co-operation—at a price—of the shrewder members of Mary's conservative government. They broke the ice which four centuries ago cut Russia off from the West, and established links of trade and friendship which have often been endangered but have never for long ceased to exist, because they are to the advantage of both countries. But today those links are very tenuous. We could profitably follow the example of the merchants and gentlemen of the Russia Company in strengthening and developing them.

CHRISTOPHER HILL.

A POLICY OF SOCIALISM AND PEACE

Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, 1917-1941, Vol. III. Ed. Jane Degras. (Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 42/-.)

THE third and concluding volume of this selection of Soviet Foreign Policy documents has the virtues and vices of its predecessors. There are the same kind of omissions, abbreviations and occasional slips of translation as before. For instance, Stalin's intensely important speech on the *International Significance of the Five-Year Plan* (Russ. Edit. XIII, pp. 161-171), which would have been a fitting prelude to this volume, has been left out. His report to the Seventeenth Congress of the CPSU—to take but the early stages of the period covered by this collection—has been far too rigorously cut, while his interview with W. Duranty—significant for its references not only to the League of Nations but also to Roosevelt-America, to world trade, and so on—has been amputated from five pages to less than half a page. On the other hand, those of the 1939-41 papers which are derived exclusively from German sources would seem to raise the question of how much care and corroboration has been applied to them.

But if these points are borne in mind, the nearly 500 pages of solid material should be of value to everyone not in command of Russian—for they bring out, in all its forthrightness and vigour, the international stand of the USSR. Litvinov's brilliant dialectics, Molotov's analytical hammer-blows, and Stalin's fundamental and classical formulations alike reflect the USSR's policy of socialism and peace. The reader is not altogether helped by the publicity accompanying the book. According to the blurb: "the Soviet Government's preoccupation . . . with Germany", its "anxiety about Japanese intentions . . . and its deep mistrust of the Western Powers . . . run through the entire story. Against this background, the conclusion of the Non-Aggression Pact with Germany and the conciliation of Japan appear less startling than they did at the time." In reality the documents prove that the Soviet Union, while vigilant in every direction, was not only less "mistrustful" of the Western Powers than of the Axis, but unflinching in her desire for co-operation with them against it. One has only to re-read Stalin's Report to the Seventeenth Congress of the CPSU, or Molotov's speech at the Supreme Soviet in May 1939, or Zhdanov's *Pravda* article in the following June, to be reminded of the actual reasons accounting for Moscow's temporary arrangement with Berlin and Tokio. Equally revealing are the documents mirroring Soviet resistance to Hitler before his invasion of Russia. The statements, for instance, on Bulgaria, Hungary, Yugoslavia and Rumania (pp. 474, 477, 482-6) should finally kill the myth, still cultivated in certain quarters, of Soviet "co-operation" with the Reich.

The documents, moreover, recall the constant elements in Soviet foreign policy. They show how, from the whirlpool of the years which witnessed the course and the crimes of Nazism, the rape of Abyssinia and of Austria, the crucifixion of Spain, the betrayal of Czechoslovakia, and the scourging of China by imperialist Japan, the Kremlin stood out like a rock, defending basic principles. "The bases of Soviet foreign policy are unchanged . . . we proposed . . . disarmament. . . . We do not arm in order to measure our strength against another's strength, but so that others may not be tempted by the hope of measuring theirs against ours with impunity" (Litvinov, November 1936, p. 125). "We are for peace and for preventing any further development of aggression." " . . . threatening the Soviet Union does not achieve its object" (Molotov, May 1939, pp. 334, 5, 339). "It is not so easy in our day suddenly to . . . plunge straight into war without regard . . . for public opinion. Bourgeois politicians know this very well. . . . A military bloc . . . ? Good gracious, do you call that a bloc? . . . All

'we' have is a harmless . . . ' . . . triangle' . . ." (Stalin, March 1939, p. 317). " . . . despite all efforts of the Soviet Government," the western governments "have no wish for a treaty on terms of equality with the USSR, that is for the only kind of treaty to which a self-respecting State can agree." They "make it appear that serious differences exist . . . on questions which, given goodwill and sincere intention . . . could be solved without delay . . ." (Zhdanov, June 1939, pp. 352, 3).

Every word has been vindicated by history. Those who today again dismiss the Soviet pleas as propaganda, their warnings as bluff, and their actions as manoeuvres, may perhaps benefit from the study of this book published under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

ARTHUR JENKIN

MINERS IN LITERATURE

Shakhteri v Khudozhestvennoi Literaturye.
[Miners in Literature.] (Ugletekhizdat 1952, pp. 796, 22 rubles.)

THIS massive volume, brought out by the publishing house of the Miners' Trade Unions of the USSR, is made up of complete items (stories and poems) or excerpts from novels, essays, poems and other forms of literature. Under the heading *In the Capitalist Prison-House* there are represented such writers as Emile Zola, Theodore Dreiser, K. Capek and J. Fucik. These, together with extracts from Maurice Thorez and André Stil, make up sixteen pictures of the miner's life in the countries of the West. As many more come from Tsarist Russia, including a section giving many more extracts are given under the headings *In the Free Land of the Soviets* and *Taking the Example from Soviet People*.*

Among over three score Soviet authors quoted are Alexei Tolstoy in his story *Bread*, A. Fadeyev in his novel *The Young Guard*, B. Polevoy in his story *Victory*, and *Verses* from A. Surkov and V. Mayakovsky. There is also, as one might expect, an extract from *The Story of My Life*, by A. Stakhanov, the miner whose new methods of work gave its name to the great movement of the Stakhanovites in every industry.

The selection of items from literature in the capitalist countries is fairly representative, though one misses Heinrich Heine's description of the silver miners in his *Hartzreise*. It is significant that so little should have been written about miners in the capitalist countries. It is not to the credit of English literature that in a period of several generations, when the miners and their wives and families made up nearly one-tenth of the working popula-

*Perhaps better *Exemplary Soviet People*.

tion, that the whole galaxy of the English novel from Walter Scott and Dickens to its last great representatives should have failed to give any real living picture of the workers in this industry. Consequently Britain is represented only by a story of James Welsh's.

It was better in France. But even so Emile Zola's *Germinal* found few to follow in the path that he had opened. It is a remarkable contrast that the life and struggles of the miner, and now his achievements, are being described with such fullness and frequency in the USSR, in a society where labour can be regarded as a matter of honour and glory.

The contrast is equally pointed by the fact that this wide-embracing and enlivening compilation should have been put together and made available to the miners of the Soviet Union under the auspices of their trade union organisation. It is an example of the care for the cultural life and development of the miners which has been followed in one or two instances by Areas of the National Union of Mine-workers in this country, but is still rare enough, even in an undeveloped form, in the main coal-fields of the world.

R. PAGE ARNOT

MAGNIFICENT REPRODUCTIONS AND DISAPPOINTING TEXT

Russian Icons. Int. Philip Schweinfurth. (Batsford, 30/-.)

THIS book is beautifully produced, with fourteen lovely colour plates of icons and twelve fine monochromes. All the reproductions are magnificent, and the colours dazzling—particularly the reds and yellows. Almost all the icons in colour in the book are outside the USSR and most of them belong to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (the one exception being A. Rublev's *Holy Trinity*).

So much for the colour plates and illustrations. The text—both of the introduction and notes to the colour plates—is very disappointing. There are many inaccuracies, ambiguities and even errors mixed with some interesting observations. To quote a reference to the Western Church: "The image continued to be tolerated by the Western Church as the Bible of the ignorant, or inserted into the system of 'those who intercede and help in need'." (p. 24). In another place the author says that the priest "distributes the sacrament to the kneeling congregation with a spoon" (p. 40—description of Liturgy). In the Russian Orthodox Church, however, those who are to receive the sacrament, after prostrating themselves, come up to the priest one after the other and receive the sacrament *standing*.

The explanations in front of the colour plates are very uneven. The comments on the Ascension (Plate IV) are so confused that it is difficult to see what the author is trying to say. The text opposite Plate XIV is very unsatisfactory. The so-called "Sophia—the Wisdom of God" icons in Russia are not icons of our Lord, though in the general sense the Son of God is, of course, the wisdom of God. There are three main types of such icons, depicting Sophia either as an angel, as Our Lady, or as the Church. The general conception is not clear but revolves round such ideas as the Word of God, Our Lady, Purity, Humanity. These are some of the most ancient and original Russian icons.

It is a pity that the main differences between Russian iconography and that of Byzantium are not shown clearly. For though the Russians started with imitation, very soon they developed along quite independent lines—just as they did in architecture—departing from the severe Byzantine tradition. Rublev, for instance, the greatest Russian icon painter, is far more humanistic in his approach, his faces are more moulded and realistic, there is a great deal of movement in the figures. The Russian colours are bright and lighter (even with white) than those of the Greek originals.

It is unfortunate that the compilers of this book did not get in touch with appropriate circles in the USSR, where so much restoration and research is being carried on in connection with icons.

XENIA FIELDING CLARKE

SOVIET LITERATURE

Through the Glass of Soviet Literature. Ed. E. J. Simmons. (Cumberlege/Columbia UP, 30/-.)

Modern Russian Literature. Marc Slonim. (Cumberlege/OUP, New York, 42/-.)

WHEN writers of the stature of Dostoyevsky and Chekhov wrote with brilliance of different groupings of Russian nineteenth-century society and not only reflected but re-worked in artistic form certain great truths common to those groupings, the literature and writers of other countries early in the twentieth century recognised them as great artists, though the literary society of the day felt it incumbent upon it to speak with faint vapourings of the "Russian soul" and the "eternal student" which constituted "mysterious Russia". The concept of art for art's sake disappeared, since here was a key to unlock that "eastern kingdom of snow and bears", so that nonsensical generalisations could be made about the Russian people as a whole.

How much more significant is it today, when art for its own sake is a concept

grimly clung to by people of no talent and less imagination, to find two self-styled specialists turning Soviet literature into a weapon with which to beat the Soviet people, for the furtherance of anti-Soviet feelings and concepts. And all in the name of objectivity!

Mr. Slonim protests first that there is too much to read in preparing a history of Soviet literature and then that he has to go outside Soviet Russia for his information because it is too scanty; Mr. Simmons and his collaborators assert that views of *Russian* [my italic. E.F.] society can best be gleaned through study of Soviet literature. All appear to need stereoscopic spectacles; they are constantly reading between the lines into a third dimension which cannot be reached by a simple perusal and detailed study of the press, speeches, reports, eye-witness accounts, which would furnish them with ample material for many more weighty tomes.

Mr. Simmons's collaborators in their sections on women, Jews, children, do not appear to have noticed that any fiction, however bad they may think it, has been written since the late 1930s; the index to Mr. Slonim's book shows a predilection for lengthy references to writers from 1904 to 1930. Is the enigmatic Russian soul they are trying to unlock that of the first quarter of the twentieth century alone?

Mr. Slonim from the depths of his scholarship asserts that the writing of a history of Soviet literature is "conceivable only outside of the Soviet Union". Soviet scholars have just produced Volume I of such a history (1917-1941), for discussion purposes: judging from the discussion, "Communist literary policy" has been debated at length and without fear. (*Izvestia Akademii Nauk Vol. XI, No. 4, 1952. Otdeleniye Literatury i Yazika*.) Although all Mr. Slonim's exhaustive reading could find were a few "evasive and pedestrian chapters in some text-books", I have before me on the table two volumes of 300 pages each which are tenth-class text-books (for 17-year-olds) on Russian Soviet literature (1948-51 editions).

The publisher's blurb stresses that Mr. Slonim attempts to survey Soviet literature in relation to social and economic changes

from Chekhov to the present day, and Mr. Simmons and his collaborators see Soviet literature (reading between the lines, of course) as a source of information on social and economic problems in the Soviet Union. Mr. Simmons's collaborators pile up the footnotes in defence of their points. Mr. Slonim provides a selected reference list of books for his many chapters. Bothered though he is by the "fashion" (!) he sees in the novels of the 1940s "for marital fidelity and wholesome family life", he nevertheless makes a sounder factual assessment of the literary work of many of the writers whose work he describes than the said sociological remark might lead one to expect.

In describing one of Mikhail Prishvin's heroes, however, he appears to consider a respect for artistic work, "the highest achievement of mankind", as belonging only to the Tolstoyans, and to attribute Prishvin's ideas and standpoint solely to the influence of populism.

As he can only cite a 1936 English edition of Anton Makarenko's *Road to Life* in his reference lists, and lest those of our readers who cannot read Russian (as Mr. Slonim can), should be unaware of these same principles expressed in Soviet terms, I quote from Volume II of the first full translation of Makarenko's book*: "It was a joy, perhaps the deepest joy the world has to give, this feeling of interdependence, of the strength and flexibility of human relationships, of the calm, vast power of the collective, vibrating in an atmosphere permeated with its own power."

If only all these experts would, like the Lady of Shalott, stop looking through the glass and break the spell, their mirror would crack from side to side; they could look straight out through the window into Soviet life and literature, and we might at last get a book on Soviet literature of scholarship and objectivity.

E. FOX.

* Reviewed in *ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL*, Volume XIII, No. 2. (FLPH/Collet's, 3 Vols., 12/6.).

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Roubles.)

The ANGLO-SOVIET
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SCR NOTES

OWING to the warmly welcomed visit to this country, from November 3 to December 7, of twenty-seven Soviet dancers, singers, instrumentalists, scientists, and other delegates, some of the SCR events that had been announced for November and December were cancelled, and a number of other events were arranged. Below is a complete list of our London activities during the autumn of 1953.

LONDON MEETINGS AND OTHER EVENTS

September—December 1953

(All at 14 Kensington Square unless otherwise stated)

September

- 30th: Lecture. *My Visit to Moscow and Leningrad*. Miles Malleson.* Chair : Gordon Sandison.

October

- 1st: Lecture. *My Visit to Soviet Central Asia*. Mrs. Ela Reid.* (London Correspondent, *Hindustan Times*). Chair : D. T. Richnell.
- 7th: Lecture. *Shakespeare and Chekhov in the USSR*. John Fernald.* Chair : André Van Gyseghem.
- 8th: Discussion. *The Economic Theory of a Planned Society*. Maurice Dobb and Joan Robinson. Chair : Peter Keen. (First of a series of three talks on Soviet Planning.)
- 9th: Lecture. *The Novgorod Discoveries*. R. E. F. Smith. Chair : A. Rothstein.
- 13th: Lecture. *The Soviet Arts Today*. John Berger.* Chair : Peter de Francia.
- 17th: Social Evening. Balalaika Group. London Folk Dancers. M.C. : D. T. Richnell.
- 21st: Symposium. *Architects in the USSR*. Nares Craig,* C. Handisyde,* A. D. Jones,* B. Lubetkin,* Colin Penn,* C. R. Whittaker,* F. R. Yerbury* and F. R. S. Yorke.* Chair : A. Ling. (Report of 1953 Architects' Delegation.)
- 22nd: Lecture. *Impressions of the Soviet Health Services, 1953*. Dr. B. Kirman.* Chair : Dr. P. Hart. 8.15 p.m.
- 29th: Lecture. *The Budget and Planning, 1953*. R. W. Davies. Chair : Brian Pearce. (Second talk in Planning series.)

November

- 5th: Lecture. *An Archaeologist Visits the Soviet Union*. Professor V. Gordon Childe.* Chair : Robert Browning.
- 6th: Concert. *Chaikovsky: Sixty Years Since his Death*. Soviet recordings of his songs. Introduced by D. T. Richnell.
- 12th: Lecture. *Recent Developments in Soviet Biology*. Dr. H. Gordon* and Dr. A. G. Morton.
- 14th: Children's film show. 2.30 p.m. Lecture, with Question-and-Answer discussion. *Soviet Cinema Art*. G. Alexandrov. 7.30 p.m.
- 17th: Lecture. *Polytechnical Education in the USSR*. Eric Godfrey. At the College of Preceptors, 3 Bloomsbury Square, W.C.1. 6 p.m.

- 21st: Symposium. *The Soviet Attitude to the Arts*. John Alexander, Professor J. S. Spink, Professor Bernard Stevens, G. Alexandrov and S. Obratzsov. Chair: Gordon Sandison. **At the Beaver Hall, Garlick Hill, E.C.4. 3-7 p.m.**
- 22nd: Private Puppet show. S. Obratzsov. **At the Salle Erard, Great Marlborough Street. 3 p.m.**
- 26th: Puppet show. S. Obratzsov. **At the New Boltons Theatre Club, Drayton Gardens. 8 p.m.**
- 27th: Lecture. *Painless Childbirth in Practice, by Pavlovian Methods*. Dr. F. Lamaze. With a film. **8.15 p.m.**
- 28th: Gala Performance for Children. A. Barayev and Galya Izmailova; K. Shatilov and Alla Shelest; G. Farmanyants; the Piatnitsky Trio (Klymov, Shubarin and Sorokin). Introduced by S. Obratzsov, and compered by André Van Gysegghem. **At the Royal Festival Hall. 11 a.m.**
- ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF SCR*, followed by reception to Mr. Bogatyrev, head of the English Section of VOKS. **3.30 p.m.**
- 30th: Lecture, with Question-and-Answer discussion. *Pædiatrics in the USSR*. Dr. M. Ilina and Dr. M. Kazantseva. **8 p.m.**

December

- 1st: Lecture. *Educational Psychology in the USSR*. Dr. B. Kirman.* **At the Institute of Education, Malet Place, W.C.1.**
- 2nd: Question-and-Answer discussion with Soviet musicians. **3 p.m.**
Puppet show. S. Obratzsov. **At the Theatre Royal, Stratford** (in association with Theatre Workshop). **8 p.m.**
- 3rd: Reception to Soviet delegation. **At the Porchester Hall. 7.30 p.m.**
- 4th: Lecture, with Question-and-Answer discussion. *Soviet Education*. G. P. Bessedin.
- 5th: Song Recital. Zara Dolukhanova. **At the Wigmore Hall. 3 p.m.**
- 31st: New Year's Eve Party. **8 p.m.—midnight.**

* *Visited the USSR in 1953.*

Appointment of Organiser

Mr. K. Watkins has been appointed Organiser of the SCR, and has already taken up his duties, which will cover questions of membership, circulation of the *ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL* and other SCR publications, provincial branches, and so on.

SCR PROVINCIAL SECRETARIES

Readers of *THE ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL* may wish to get in touch with the Secretary of the local SCR Committee so that they may be kept informed of local SCR activities. The following list is appended for their convenience.

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1924 - 1954

The SCR is thirty years old this year.

We are sure that all our members will wish to congratulate the Society on reaching its thirtieth birthday, and we shall be very happy to welcome all SCR members and friends at the various events we are planning in celebration of the event. With their co-operation and support, we shall make 1954 one of the best years the Society has known.

SCR

Recent Translations and Bulletins

Painless Childbirth by Pavlovian Methods. 1. The Scientific Basis.
A. P. Nikolayev. 2. *Results Obtained at the Paris Metalworkers'
Clinic, under the direction of Dr. Lamaze.* 2/6 (2/-). **Pav. 7**

*The Tasks of the USSR Academy of Sciences in relation to the
Fifth Five-Year Plan.* Academician A. N. Nesmeyanov. 1/6 (1/-).
Sci. 4

Attention and its Development. Professor N. F. Dobrynin. 1/6 (1/-).
Psy. 7

Secondary School Syllabus of Modern History. (Third section (1640-
1918), of RSFSR Ministry of Education world history course,
1952.) 2/6 (2/-). **Ed. 17**

Sadko : Folk Epic, Opera and Film. E. Pomeranyseva. 1/6 (1/-).
Film 5

Mayakovsky Discussion. 1/6 (1/-). **Writers 5**

Rudimentary Forms of Products Exchange. N. Smolin. (Vop.
Ekon. 1, 53) **Soc. Sci. 5**

Recent Developments in Soviet Clinical Medicine. Angus McPherson.
Experience of Work in a District Hospital. K. V. Malutina.
Resuscitation. Local Health Councils. 2/6 (1/9). **Med. 8**

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